National Library of Canada
Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services Branch
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Direction des acquisitions et des services bibliographiques
395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

*Your file* *Votre référence*

*Our file* *Notre référence*

## NOTICE

**The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.**

**If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.**

**Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.**

**Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.**

## AVIS

**La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.**

**S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.**

**La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.**

**La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.**

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# PERSPECTIVES ON CURRICULUM CHANGE: A NARRATIVE APPROACH

BY

SHARON I. JAMIESON

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

Edmonton, Alberta

SPRING, 1993

National Library of Canada
Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services Branch
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Direction des acquisitions et des services bibliographiques
395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

*Your file Votre référence*

*Our file Notre référence*

**The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.**

**L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.**

**The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.**

**L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.**

ISBN 0-315-82083-7

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: SHARON I. JAMIESON

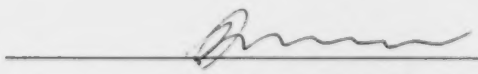
TITLE OF THESIS: PERSPECTIVES ON CURRICULUM CHANGE:
A NARRATIVE APPROACH

DEGREE: Doctor of Philosophy

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1993

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other righes in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as hereinbefore provided neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.



266 Dechene Road

Edmonton, AB, T6M 1W4

February 11/93

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Perspectives on Curriculum: A Narrative Approach" submitted by Sharon I. Jamieson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

J.B. Parsons (supervisor)

R. S. Patterson

D.J. Clandinin

L.S. Beauchamp (chair)

K.G. Jacknicke

F.M. Connelly (external examiner)

Date: Dec 17/92

## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to the graduates of Alberta Normal Schools -- especially to those who have taken the time to share their stories and their lives as teachers.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to use a narrative inquiry model to examine differing perspectives on curriculum change. The study focuses on the stories of teachers and teacher practice during two periods of curriculum change; the first years of development of the educational system within the new Province of Alberta, and a period of significant curriculum change to the Alberta Social Studies curriculum during the1970s.

Chapter 1 begins with a personal narrative on teaching which explores the dilemmas teachers face in their day-to-day work. The problem of conflict posed by the multiple ways in which individuals understand their professional practice is raised and Schon's (1979) work on social reform through problem-setting and frame restructuring is discussed.

Chapter 2 discusses narrative inquiry and lays out a framework for analysis of narrative that focuses on the dialectics of individual/social, and personal/professional knowledge. The relationship of time (past and present) in understanding individual narratives is explored and presented as a mutually conditioning phenomenon. The process of building a story from multiple perspectives is explained and the story of Gertie Slavic, a graduate of the Camrose Normal School in 1920, is presented. This story is then discussed in the context of the individual/social and personal/professional framework.

Chapter 3 uses Gertie Slavic's narrative, excerpts from Department of Education Annual Reports, and material collected from Normal School Graduates to build a composite story of teacher practice during the first two decades of Alberta's

emergence as a province.

Chapter 4 tells the story of Dorothy Makinen's first two years of teaching during the 1970s. Dorothy's knowledge and adaptation of curriculum to match her individual/social background and her personal/professional knowledge are explored.

Chapter 5 looks at perspectives on curriculum and uses the metaphor of separate cultures to explore curriculum change from the perspective of teacher practice as opposed to the curriculum as planned by educational administrators and curriculum developers. A composite story of the establishment and subsequent changes to the 1971 Social Studies Curriculum is presented. The problems inherent in curriculum change are discussed and an alternative frame for curriculum change is suggested.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

There are many people I would like to thank for their support and encouragement. My family has been a continuous source of strength for me. I would like to thank my father, Stuart Jamieson and my mother, Isabel for their constant insistance that I was special and could do anything I set my mind to. I know I have the two of you to thank for my curiousity and my tenacity. I'll leave you two to decide who bestowed which. Thanks, Mom and Dad.

I would also like to thank my brother Allen Jamieson. Many of the challenges you have thrown at me as a school principal formed the bases for my questioning. Thanks to my sister, Pat Cookson for your constant pleasure in my achievements. Siblings are not always so generous. I am truely fortunate to have both of your support.

I would like to thank my daughter Danielle and my son Jason for their infinite patience. I am sure it will feel strange for the first time in your lives to have a mother who is not taking courses or writing papers. I only hope I can be as supportive of the two of you in your future studies as you have been for me. I also want to acknowledge my wonderful grandson Justin who was born shortly before I defended. May you have the same opportunities and support I have had.

The day of my dissertation defense was one of the most pleasurable days of my life. I have several colleagues to thank for this special experience. My external examiner Michael Connelly provided a wonderful context for my work with his thoughtful questions. I am sure this is one of the reasons the day went so well for me. One of the other reasons was the careful guidance I received from my supervisor Jim

Parsons. Thanks Jim. I am a better writer because of you. I would also like to thank Bob Patterson for the support and opportunities you have provided me. It is impossible for me to express the joy I have taken in your mentorship. I miss you Bob. I would also like to thank Jean Clandinin for introducing me to the wonders of narrative and for taking the time to read and edit my work. Graduate student life is better because of professors like you Jean. I would also like to acknowledge the other members of my committee, Larry Beauchamp and Ken Jacknicke for their encouragement and humour -- especially their humour. Finally, thank you Myer Horowitz for your constant encouragement. Your sensible, down-to-earth advice kept me in touch with the real task at hand.

I was fortunate to have a number of co-workers who took joy in my achievements. This is truely a gift. Thanks to Betsate Melaku who saw me through three degrees and never doubted me for a moment. Thanks also to Yvonne Norton, Jean Greenidge, Joyce Hiller, Betty-Jo Werthmann, Fran Harder, Olive Garvey, Edie Peters, and Nancy Smiley. I felt you pu!ling for me. There can be no better co-workers.

Last and most important -- thanks to my beloved David. What can I say about a relationship that is so supportive and nurturing that I am considering taking another degree -- just kidding.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Chapter 1 | Back to School | 1 |
| | Introduction | 1 |
| | Multiple perspectives and problem-solving | 15 |
| | References | 20 |
| Chapter 2 | Stories of Teaching from the Past: | |
| | Exploring the Role of the Teacher | 21 |
| | Introduction | 21 |
| | Narrative Inquiry | 23 |
| | Individual/Social Knowledge | 25 |
| | Personal/Professional Knowledge | 27 |
| | Past/Present | 29 |
| | The Process of Story-building | 31 |
| | Gertie Slavic's Story | 33 |
| | Story Themes | 39 |
| | Gertie's Personal/Professional Knowledge | 43 |
| | References | 45 |
| Chapter 3 | Stories of Teaching from the Past: | |
| | A Story with Mulitiple Perspectives | 47 |
| | Introduction | 47 |
| | Building a School System in a New Province | 50 |
| | Alberta's Climate: A Challenge for Teachers | 53 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Establishing Standards | 55 |
| | The School Program | 59 |
| | Teacher Education | 61 |
| | Stories of Teaching and Evaluation | 68 |
| | The Role of the Teacher | 75 |
| | Individual/Social Values | 77 |
| | Personal/Professional Knowledge | 81 |
| | Conclusion | 86 |
| | References | 88 |
| Chapter 4 | Dorothy's Story: The first two years of teaching | 89 |
| | Introduction | 89 |
| | Conversations in the Staff Room | 90 |
| | Dorothy Makinen | 91 |
| | The Trip to Little Buffalo | 94 |
| | The Community | 97 |
| | Life for Teachers in the Community | 98 |
| | The Students | 100 |
| | Teaching | 101 |
| | Administrators and Consultants | 106 |
| | The Trip to Edmonton | 108 |
| | The End of the First Year | 111 |
| | Moving to Peace River | 111 |
| | The Dilemmas in Dorothy's Stories | 113 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Dorothy as a Teacher | 116 |
| | Conclusion | 120 |
| | References | 121 |
| Chapter 5 | The Separate Cultures of Curriculum | 123 |
| | Perspectives on Curriculum | 123 |
| | The 1971 Social Studies Curriculum | 129 |
| | Organizational Change | 133 |
| | Curriculum Development | 135 |
| | The Downey Report | 137 |
| | Canadian Content | 145 |
| | Teaching | 152 |
| | The Individual/Social Dialectics of Curriculum | 158 |
| | The Personal/Professional Dialectics of Curriculum | 161 |
| | Curriculum: Text or Environment? | 164 |
| | References | 170 |

## Back to School

> Most efforts to improve schools founder on reefs of ignorance - ignorance of the ways schools function in general and ignorance of the inner workings of selected schools in particular...Seymour Sarason warned that schools have distinctive cultures that must be understood and involved if changes are to be more than cosmetic ...Principals and teachers who do not want what others seek to impose upon them often are extraordinarily adept at nullifying or defusing practices perceived to be in conflict with prevailing ways of doing things. (Goodlad, 1984, p. 16)
>
> I just cannot live with [the failure of these children]. It's not my fault; it's not. It's the system. And I don't know about participating in a system that would send X number of resource kids to your room knowing that, no matter who the teacher is, you're going to have problems. The system is just not OK for the kids. And it's not OK for me. (Hollingsworth, 1992, p. 393)

### Introduction

Until 1989 I had never worked in a school. My stomach fluttered as I drove up Steele Heights Junior High School in the late summer of 1989. The school was situated on several square blocks of land encased in a wire cage that fenced in two other elementary schools and a Catholic junior high school. Seagulls wheeled in flight over the playing field, crying hoarsely against the blue sky. A metal bike rack stood to one side a lone, wheelless bike held in its grasp. The monotony of the squat brick building was broken by multiple safety doors. I clutched my briefcase more firmly in

my hand and walked down the uneven concrete sidewalk catching my heel and stumbling as I went. I glanced quickly around, relieved that no one had seen, and pushed firmly on the door. No result. I pulled. No result - I was locked out. I went to each door in turn and finally found one that was open. My first day as a teacher at Steele Heights Junior High School had begun.

It's difficult to express my emotions as I entered the relative gloom of the West entry hall and saw the school office directly ahead with a sign asking visitors to please report. The smell was a familiar one that brought back a rush of memories, not all pleasant, from my childhood. The acrid odour of floor polish that always marked the end of a holiday and return to school mixed with the stale tickle of chalk dust hanging in the air. I was drawn through the office by the smell of fresh coffee wafting out from the teachers' lounge, mixed with the air freshener used in the women's washroom, a not entirely successful measure. The lounge was a jumble of tables, some orange lounge furniture reminiscent of the 1970's and a small kitchen containing a very elaborate, four pot drip coffee machine rented from a local firm. Someone had brought in doughnuts and some homemade goodies which were scattered in boxes and plates around the tables. I was instantly adopted by one of the teachers and introduced around. Most were in casual dress: jeans, sweats, t-shirts, and shorts. This was a day to pick up timetables and class lists, arrange homerooms and catch up with colleagues. Each time a teacher entered the lounge he or she was greeted with loud calls and jokes and often hugs. I felt like I was on the outside looking in, trying to guess what the in-jokes meant, wondering whether I was sitting in anyone's space and

how I would make friends with these people. The principal circulated throughout the group, greeting people, asking questions and occasionally making notes on small cards.

A staff meeting was planned in the afternoon. There was a tension in the air, almost as if this superimposition of order was resented. The contrast between the staff room and the meeting room was striking. We met in the Library/Resource room where the tables had been arranged into a large rectangle. There was a binder at each place with a name on the front. Oh good, I thought. At least I would know where to sit. We were placed in alphabetical order. The principal introduced the staff and provided an overview of what each of us had done during the summer, referring to the notes he had made of our conversations in the teachers' lounge. I felt there was something unauthentic and uncomfortable about this exercise. I was introduced as a visitor from the University who would be on staff for the next year on a .67 basis.

The principal's welcome was warm and I felt my presence sparked some curiosity but little enthusiasm. He took a few minutes to lay out his goals for the year in terms of program excellence, community involvement, and achievement exam results and he discussed the results of the recent school assessment undertaken by the school system. He then went through the material in the binders, explained the class timetable, the major events for the year and invited the head of the various committees, that is, the scholarship, amenities, etc., commitees to provide additional information. As the meeting progressed there was more and more discussion amongst the teachers and less and less attention paid to the principal.

It was a curious experience for me. I found myself responding to the undercurrent of comments that flipped about the room as the principal spoke. I found myself smiling at a clever, but unkind quip and then glancing surreptitiously at the principal. I was, after all, a guest, expected to earn my keep, but not really one of the gang. I must be on my best behaviour. Having decided that this meeting was actually something very familiar to me, something like a Faculty Council or Executive Committee meeting at the University, I was lulled into a sense of the familiar. I was jolted out of my taken-for-granted world when one of the teachers stood up and expressed the opinion that the bell system was crap and made it impossible for students to move in an orderly fashion between class changes. This was certainly plainer speech than I was accustomed to. Perhaps there was more of a difference from Faculty Council than I thought. As the meeting progressed there was a clear signal in the actions of the teachers that they had enough. They had their own agendas to attend to and getting ready for the first day of class was more important to them than this meeting. The principal could have only so much of their time and then they had important work to do. Wisely, it seemed to me, he called the meeting to an end.

I wandered down the halls at the end of the meeting looking at the different classrooms in which I would be teaching. I came across a tall blonde woman standing on a desk to staple posters to the space above the blackboard. Her room was a collection of cuddly animal pictures and posters on safe sex. Her name was Dorothy and she taught social studies, language arts and health. Dorothy and I became friends during the year. Because my appointment was not full-time, I did not have a

homeroom or a classroom I could call my own. Anyone who has experienced the joys of being a travelling teacher in a school will understand just how many difficulties result from not having your own room. At the time, it did not even occur to me as a problem. As I recollect the experience now, I wish I had gone full time in order to have my own homeroom. Dorothy's stories about her homeroom and the relationships formed with students during this time suggested that students get to know teachers in a very different way in a homeroom situation, or through dropping into the classroom after school.

The everyday non-instructional time spent with students provides teachers with an opportunity to talk on a more personal level with students and gives students a way of knowing and interpreting individual teachers to other students. A teacher becomes part of the culture of the school, a mythology is created and students tell stories about particular teachers. Dorothy, for example, was known for her Mark of Makinen. This was a punishment meted out to students who failed to return library books, or return signed notes from parents. Dorothy would take out a hand mirror from her desk and apply the brightest red lipstick imaginable to her lips. She would then threaten to plant a kiss on the forehead of anyone failing to remember to bring the required material. No one, to my knowledge, ever bore the Mark of Makinen, but she always managed to be the homeroom teacher with the best record for returned library books.

My teaching load for the year was three grade nine social studies classes and one grade eight language arts class. My largest social studies class had 33 students; five of them were adaptation students, two were esl students and eight or nine of them

were in the academic challenge program. The varying classifications were confusing and, other than the class list which identified the categories, I had little understanding of what I was expected to do with students assigned to a specific group. Apparently I was teaching students with varying abilities, but most of the students classified as academic challenge students did not perform any better than the students without classification and some of the adaptation students outperformed some of the academic challenge students. All of the unclassified students felt they were being ignored.

I was excited about the opportunity to teach at this time. The social studies curriculum had just been revised and I had been involved in co-authoring a text related to one of the grade 9 topics. The school had purchased this text and I was going to get an opportunity to see firsthand how the work we had done was received by students. I had also taught social studies curriculum and instruction courses to teacher education students. Here was a chance to think about the teacher education program, my own teaching practices, and to explore how curriculum change was implemented in a school.

The school was large enough to be divided into departments. The social studies department consisted of all of the teachers who taught social studies across the three grades. We met as a group on a regular basis and solved problems related to particular students, planned tests, and discussed other curriculum matters. We all taught at least one other subject and more than one grade level. Two of the teachers were also physical education teachers and always wore sweatsuits to our meetings. They were the object of envy or disapproval, depending on how you felt about what

you thought should be worn to school.

During the year I was introduced to a phenomenon I called the fifteen minute meeting. In my administrative role I was accustomed to a lot of meetings, most of them at least an hour in length often resulting in a series of follow-up agendas and meetings, note-taking and correspondence. Teachers don't have this kind of time. We "sandwiched" our meetings between lunchroom or hallway supervision, noon hour games, pizza sales or meetings with parents. Our sessions would usually start with those who were on time, usually about 60% of the group, complaining about something. This often fell into one of three categories: students, resources, or administration. The complaints would be outspoken and direct and then we would get down to work. At one meeting we agreed to a common exam for grade nine; an almost impossible task to get agreement on if we had been given adequate time to consider all of the ramifications.

The new social studies curriculum was a staff concern. Each of the social studies teachers had a collection of lesson and unit plans built up over a number of years but they did not match the new curriculum. The grade nine departmental examinations meant that a concerted effort was needed to make sure the students were taught the curriculum on which the exam would be based. The school had done rather poorly the last year in social studies grades on a system-wide comparison and the principal was expecting visible evidence of improvement this year. The grade nine social studies teachers decided to meet in order to try and develop an action plan.

We convened in the classroom (there were no meeting rooms in the building)

of the department head and squeezed into the students' wooden desks. The curriculum had three major topics: economic growth in the United States, economic growth in the U.S.S.R. and Canada: Responding to Change. The latter topic was the one around which my colleague and I had written a textbook. The meeting started with a sense of hopelessness. Very few of us had adequate spares to keep up with our day-to-day marking, let alone try to understand and teach a new curriculum. There had been an information program to disseminate information but the bottom line was that resources were not readily available to deliver the new curriculum. Each of us was going to have to develop a whole new set of lesson and unit plans, materials and evaluation strategies. Even if we pooled our resources and each of us tackled one aspect of the new curriculum, we would not have enough time. The knowledge that the principal expected us to improve the school's performance on social studies in the district comparisons did not help alleviate the gloom.

I asked the group why we didn't request the help of a consultant and some release time and was surprised by the response. Consultants were useless and there was no way, according to my colleagues, that the principal or the school superintendent would support release time for curriculum materials development. Well, fools rush in where wisewomen fear to tread! I convinced the group that we should develop a proposal and present it to the principal for approval. We did and he did. I had begun to form the opinion that teachers and administration spent a lot of time talking at, or about, each other without seriously engaging in conversation that would result in some meeting of the minds. I had really hoped to show the teachers

that it was possible to negotiate what they needed by playing the game, i.e., by writing up a proposal and submitting it formally. Unfortunately, the teachers saw this approach as a special area of expertise that I brought as a visitor and not something that real teachers could do. I did have a small success with this strategy later on when I helped the drama and music teachers develop a proposal to take a group to a festival in San Francisco. A year later I ran into one of them who said thank you and indicated they had used a similar strategy to take a group to Europe. Small victories!

So one day all of the social studies teachers from the school trekked down to the bright blue edifice that houses the school board offices and met with the social studies consultant. We spent the morning going over the new curriculum and then divided into grade level groups to share out the work. As it turned out, there were only two of us who were teaching grade nine social studies exclusively. All the other teachers were more interested in developing materials for the other grade levels. Dorothy and I agreed to develop unit and lesson plans and share them with the other grade nine teachers. This would leave them free to develop unit and lesson plans for the other grades. The consultants really did not provide us with very much help other than giving us a space to work in. Perhaps the others had known that consultants would not be of much help! When Dorothy and I began to distribute our work to the other teachers we also discovered that they had decided to approach the curriculum in their own way so while they politely accepted our work they didn't use it. All of them seemed to prefer to stick to their own tried and true lesson plans, some of them extremely outdated.

By the middle of the year I felt I had always been in the school. I had an opportunity to form relationships with many of the teachers. They quickly got over their suspicions about me as someone from the University and accepted me as one of them. Every once and awhile however someone would hold me accountable for some decision made related to practicum or would ask me to explain something that related to their own practice and the administrative infra-structure. Lisa was such a teacher. Lisa was an extremely talented young science teacher who had decided to focus on special education. She worked with the group of adaptation children in the school and had considerable success in working on metacognitive processes with her students, in order to enable them to take control of their own learning. It was because of Lisa's success with these students that I found it difficult to identify them in my social studies classes at the beginning of the year. Lisa and I often discussed how to create a more positive learning environment for her students. It became clear that what Lisa was able to create with these students in a small segregated group could not be matched by me when I dealt with them as mainstreamed into the very diverse and large social studies class. I came away feeling that I could never live up to the expectations of that dedicated and idealistic young woman. I think teaching for her was extremely frustrating and disillusioning. It seemed to make her extremely unhappy.

Lisa always felt that I had some special knowledge about administration and that I could somehow explain away some of the pain around her job. She came to me one day in tears. The principal had questioned her strategies during an evaluation and

suggested more integration with the regular classroom students. Lisa felt threatened, although it could be seen as a great opportunity for her to team teach with other teachers and to educate them on strategies that would benefit both the adaptation students and the regular students. Lisa could not see this positive benefit. She saw it as taking away her autonomy and ignoring the excellent results she had already achieved. In the end she thanked me for listening, but I know I disappointed her, once again.

The year was an extremely busy one. I organized a baby-sitting service for students to earn money to go to France, sold and/or bought chocolate bars, magazines, candles and candy-grams; organized and chaperoned dances; dealt with parents and almost managed to keep up with the daily demand for new lesson plans, marking and student feedback. The year was often more painful than joyful for me. Students came to me with problems and claimed it was I who got them through the year or blamed me because I was too easy going or hated me because I was too tough. I faced my inadequacies each day as I struggled with the needs of students who experienced such turmoil that the last thing on their minds was that they were in school to learn, besides social studies wasn't really an academic subject. At the end of the experience, in spite of the extensive support provided to me by both the principal and my fellow teachers, I came to the conclusion that I had reached as a child: schools were not good places to be; not for the student, nor for the teacher.

I returned full-time to my job at the university in July of 1990. The experience at Steele Heights added another facet to the many perspectives I have on education.

As an educator I have had many opportunities to add to my personal knowledge and experience. I have worked in university administration both at the university level and at the faculty level. I have been a student in the school system, an undergraduate in a faculty of education and a graduate student. I have taught as a graduate student and as an instructor, working with students who were preparing to be teachers. As an administrator I have served on many faculty level committees which provide me with insight into the debates around the development of teacher education programs. My interests as a scholar have included curriculum change, stories of teaching past and present, and the use of technology in teacher education programs and schooling. My opportunity to experience curriculum change first hand created a curious dissonance with the other voices within me that come from my personal experience. I began to wonder about the processes of curriculum change and what they meant for teacher practice, and conversely, what relationship existed between teacher practice and curriculum change.

It occurred to me that it was not possible to listen to all of these voices at the same time. There were different priorities and values at work as I took on one role or another. Some of these values and priorities were clearly in conflict with others. I recollect knowledge of my anger as a child going through school and feeling that schools were bad places to be. I felt my freedom and sense of my own individuality diminished as I moved from grade to grade and learned to be and do what was expected of me. Schools were places for teachers and principals there was no room for my voice or my interests or my needs.

As a teacher I saw that this was potentially true, but because of the pain and the need to deal with so many other responsibilities I traded off the needs of an individual child for the "greater good" of the total class. As if I thought I could possibly be the arbiter of such a complex value. Lessons were completed, curriculum attended to and exams developed all with the underlying rationale that I would be disadvantaging all of the students if I stopped for too long to attend to the needs of an individual student. Out of guilt I offered tutorials at lunchtime and after school. But of course most of the students didn't come. If they had failed within the classroom why would they want to fail again on their own free time? Meanwhile the demands for more accountability, more participation in community activities and more fund raising continued. The principal continued to put forward ideas for new teaching strategies, and expound upon the need to produce better results on our departmental exams.

As an administrator I sympathized with the isolation of the principal who was required to attend to the administrative components of the school. With dropping enrolments in many areas, schools were in competition with each other. A principal needed to be an entrepreneur encouraging activities that presented the school to the community and to parents in a positive light. This meant placing heavy demands on teachers to provide extra-curricular programs in sports, music, and drama. It also meant that most schools need to run fund-development activities to raise money for these extra-curricular activities. As an administrator I understood this need. As a teacher I resented the hegemony of the system; the interference of the administration in what I considered the most important part of the school - teaching.

As a teacher-educator I began to question the values inherent in the teacher education program. It seemed that I had been prepared for only the tiniest part of my work as a classroom teacher. Knowledge of the curriculum and teaching strategies was not enough. I was not prepared - I did not expect to have to adapt my practice to the needs of students on an on-going basis. Knowledge of child development and the foundations of learning was not enough. I did not expect to have such a diverse group of students to deal with on a daily basis. I had not imagined that some of my students would not be able to read. Classroom management was not enough. I did not expect that a muslim child would resent my authority in the classroom and refuse to raise his head from the desk. I did not expect that the daily language in the school would be foul and full of bigotry. Finally, professionalism was not enough. It didn't protect me from the pain of hungry, angry children whose primary needs were a safe place.

I felt a sense of fragmentation as I considered all of the different aspects of knowledge that constituted my personal experiences. Which knowledge held priority? To continue in my work as an educator I needed to find some way of resolving the conflict, some way of integrating these disparate voices into coherent personal knowledge that would guide my professional life. My restorying of my experiences and the experiences of others in the context of curriculum change and teaching is an attempt to understand the dilemmas that occur as people come into conflict with situations and to explore what this means from a variety of perspectives and how it might guide my practice.

**Multiple perspectives and problem-solving.**

Schon (1979) points out the need to recognize that people in different contexts perceive problems differently and suggests that more attention should be given to understanding a problem from these differing perspectives before we attempt to identify solutions. These differing perspectives are revealed in metaphors which Schon sees as "central to the task of accounting for our perspectives on the world: how we think about things, make sense of reality, and set the problems we later try to solve" (p. 254). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) acknowledge that "human *thought processes* are largely metaphorical" (p. 6), that "no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independent of its experiential base" (p.19) and that linguistic concepts such as metaphors "structure not just our language but our thoughts, attitudes, and actions" (p.39).

Michael Reddy (1979) acknowledges that metaphors structure our actions and that to be successful in problem-solving directed at social policy humans must first become better communicators. The frequency of failure for humans to communicate successfully can be attributed to the way communication is conceptualized. There is a tendency to objectify communication between humans as separate from their experience and context. Reddy uses a conduit metaphor to describe this problem. Meanings are treated as objects which are placed in linguistic concepts or containers and transmitted. Reddy points out that this conceptualization is not "paradigm-conscious" (p. 384); there is no reference to the experience and context of the communication recipient.

Schon suggests a different approach to successful social policy development. He focusses on problem-setting; the ways in which we frame the purposes to be achieved rather than problem-solving; the selection of optimal means for achieving them. Problem-setting is driven by the stories that people use to describe what is wrong and what needs fixing. The framing of problems often depends upon the metaphors underlying the stories. These metaphors generate problem-setting and direct problem-solving. Schon identifies three components significant to the process of problem-setting; frame conflict, frame restructuring, and the generative metaphor. Frame conflict occurs when a problem is understood and described from different perspectives. Examples of frame conflict can be found in debates over curriculum change. The curriculum philosopher might propose a progressive curriculum that focusses on individual knowledge and freedom, the administrator might argue for a standardized curriculum that makes it possible to account to the public. The politician might wish to see the chimerical demands of the public attended to such as back to the basics, individualized instruction, and values education.The teacher might argue that dealing with 30 students in a mainstreamed classroom is difficult enough without adding the need to adapt to a new curriculum.

Schon points out that this form of frame conflict constitutes a dilemma. There is no possibility of refuting any of the perspectives by referring to facts. Typically, problem-solving would be assigned to the most powerful group and the concerns expressed in the other problem-setting frames would not be attended to. The debate and the problem would continue as power shifted to someone who held another

perspective. This process creates conflict between participants and results in a struggle for power rather than a collaborative search for a mutually acceptable solution. The problem is not solved; the power just shifts from time to time as societal values shift. Schon provides an example of the shift in societal values through an analysis of the change in metaphors used to describe a specific problem. Social policy developers described the urban problem in the United States as "congestion" in the 1950s, "poverty" in the 1960s and "fiscal insolvency" in the 1970s (p. 261).

Schon points out that the problem-solving perspective directs us to search for solutions, the problems are accepted as givens. The inadequacy of a problem-solving perspective in social policy development has been noticed among the practitioners of social policy, as well as the public at large. Problems should not be treated as givens. They are constructed by human beings in their attempts to make sense of complex and troubling situations.

Schon suggests frame restructuring as a way to avoid confrontation and a struggle for power. Restructuring is achieved through a process of interpreting different perspectives and developing a new problem-setting frame that accounts for factors common to each of these perspectives. Inherent in this process is the creation of generative metaphors. Metaphors within each frame are interpreted and adapted to provide a new vision of the problem and the purposes that are to be achieved. According to Schon the essential problem-setting functions are to select a few salient features and relations for attention from what would be an overwhelmingly complex reality. These are organized coherently to describe what is wrong with the situation in

a way that provides direction for future transformation. The metaphors are built on "certain purposes and values, certain normative images" (p.266) which hold power within the culture. These metaphors "are ordinarily tacit. Often we are unaware of the metaphors that shape our perception and understanding of social situations" (pp. 266-267). " . . . when we interpret our problem-setting stories so as to bring their generative metaphors to awareness and reflection, then our diagnoses and prescriptions cease to appear obvious and we find ourselves involved, instead, in critical inquiry . . . Attention to generative metaphor then becomes a tool for critical reflection on our construction of the problems of social policy" (268).

This work is an exploration of the voices within me and an attempt to make sense of the experiences that come from four separate contexts for education; teaching, professional education, curriculum and administration. Narrative inquiry is used as the method for exploring how individuals from these separate contexts experience the world (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The dissertation is comprised of five chapters. Each explores some aspect of the relationship between two or more of these themes. The first chapter, this introduction, provides some information on my own personal and professional background and the experiences that resulted in my curiosity to explore these themes as well as a beginning look at how multiple perspectives might be dealt with to enact curriculum change. The second chapter lays out the theoretical framework and methodology for using narratives as a way to explore the lives of teachers and to look for occurrences of similar themes from multiple perspectives. This chapter and the third one provide the foundational

background for understanding how the role of the teacher emerged in Alberta and how this relates to teacher education, administrative practices and the curriculum. The fourth chapter explores the life of a teacher at the time of another social studies curriculum change, 1978. This provides a companion piece to the story of Gertie Slavic in chapter two and allows for some comparison among the issues that affected the teacher of 1906, 1978 and 1989. The fifth chapter continues the exploration of the 1978 curriculum change period and adds the voices of curriculum planners and other teachers. The final section of this paper discusses how the view of curriculum has evolved from the perspective of teacher, teacher educator and administrator and makes some suggestions for approaches to curriculum change and ways of seeing the curriculum.

Throughout the dissertation a similar strategy has been used. The stories of teacher practice have been combined with documents and curriculum references in an attempt to build a composite story that reveals the tension between the social/cultural values of the individual coming into a dialectical relationship with professional values and teacher practice. The primary focus is to look at what teachers say about curriculum and use this information as a way to understand better how to implement curriculum change and how to teach about curriculum.

References

Connelly, Michael, F. & Clandinin, D. Jean. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. Educational Researcher. June-July 1990, pp. 2-14.

Fullan, M. (1982). The meaning of educational change. Toronto: OISE Press.

Goodlad, J.L. (1984). A place called school. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Hollingsworth, Sandra. (1992). Learning to teach through collaborative conversation: A feminist approach. American educational research journal. Summer 1992, Vol.29, No.2, pp. 373-404.

Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors we live by. Chicago: Chicago Press.

Reddy, M.J. (1979(. The conduit metaphor - a case of frame conflict in our language about language. In A. Ortony (ed.), Metaphor & thought. Cambridge: University Press.

Schon, D.A. (1979). Generative metaphor: A perspective on problem-setting in social policy. In A. Ortony (ed.), Metaphor & thought. Cambridge: University Press.

## Stories of Teaching From the Past:

## Exploring the Role of the Teacher

> . . . he is unworthy to be a teacher who does not recognize that he is a public personage, under the public eye, and that his influence is leaving its impression for good or ill, out of school as well as in it. He has no more sacred duty than to keep himself above the suspicion of evil and to forego many things which may be harmless in themselves for the mere reason that they might be misconstrued by some overcritical people of the community or have a bad effect on the young whom his life may be consciously or unconsciously influencing. It is a supreme duty of a teacher to associate himself always and actively with those influences which stand for righteousness, morality, and community betterment. (Bennett, 1917, p. 353)[1]

### Introduction

Our Women in Education group is a collection of teachers, graduate students and University educators. The size and mix of the group changes from week to week. Our conversations travel a broad, but often twisted path: Is the fox in Rosie's Walk male or female? Is Rosie setting the fox up, or is she just plain stupid? If so, is gender stereotyping involved? Why does Nona Lyons use the story of Antigone and Creon as an introduction to her work on teachers' ethical choices? Is it academic hubris, publish or perish hegemony, or a meaningful framework for her narratives?

---

[1]From School Efficiency: A manual of modern school management. A required text in the Camrose Normal School program.

How do we share our home responsibilities with our families. Is it exploitive to have a housekeeper? What is post-modernism? How does Foucault's idea of "metaprescriptives" relate to Crites' "sacred stories" or Lyotard's "metanarratives"? Our conversations are an intricate dialectic between theory and practice, individual and social, personal and professional contexts.

One of our group talks about a new school policy that requires a teacher to report any suspected occurrence of child abuse and then refrain from further conversation with the child involved. The matter is taken over by "the authorities" who investigate "the alleged perpetrator." But what of the child? Where is the safe place and support for the child? Another shares that she provided comfort and support to an abused child and feared that, as a consequence, the legal case had been prejudiced and nothing would happen to protect the child from further abuse. Another confides that she dealt with such a case and followed the "letter of the law." Three months have gone by and nothing has happened. What of the child, indeed!

Another of us shares a story about her kindergarten class. The bright little boy who is uncomfortable because he holds an opinion that is contrary to his classmates. "I'm not evil am I?" She hesitates as she tells the story. She is in a position of trust. The child is precious. Has she said too much? Her story trails off and we fill the awkward moment with our silence. We understand; we want to know more; but this is ethical ground we are walking on. We will go no further.

The discussion in the kindergarten class sparks a comment on how times have changed. We exchange stories of earlier teaching days. One of us tells of using a

hammer to open a coconut in class and being told firmly by a student that girls don't use hammers. Another teacher, while running to catch up to someone in the hall, is told by a diminutive rule-maker that moms don't run. We talk about how and why children set rules about their own behaviour and the behaviour of teachers based on stereotypes and whether this phenomenon is changing. One of us comments that today young children seem less sure of the rules. They seem to need more time to debate and discuss. The little boy who holds a different view knows he is different and is worried. But his classmates don't censure him. They disagree with him and share their own views but they still accept him.

As we share our stories we move from individual experience to a broader social context. The stories become a springboard for a discussion about professional practice and ethical responsibility. We reflect on past experiences and acknowledge that "times have changed." There is an unspoken agreement that changes in the elements of the classroom; our students, policy, or curriculum require us to change. We link our understanding of what teaching used to be like and think about change as it relates to the time we give to our students and the way we organize them in the classroom. The stories place us in the problem and allow us to experience anothers' classroom.

**Narrative Inquiry**

It strikes me that our group is involved in research at the most practical level. We are engaged in a reflective process that allows us to enter into the experiences of other group members through story-telling. Often, our stories emerge from anomalous phenomena--surprises that occur in our day-to-day lives that require some sense-

making. Our ideas and experiences interact in a dynamic process that moves from that which is experienced to more theoretical generalizations. The story of the non-conforming child leads to discussions about how to group children in the classroom to allow more freedom for discussion and what safeguards should be in place to ensure tolerance and understanding. Our discussions are enriched by the sense of immediacy and emotion that the story has conveyed. We are connected to the pain and the uncertainty of the child.

This dynamic process is neither linear nor unidirectional. At times we move from the theoretical general to the experiential specific. A concern for a new policy leads to individual stories about child-abuse. Theoretical positions on measurement and evaluation lead us to impassioned stories about the destruction of the classroom ethos and the seductive simplicity of teaching to the exam. We use our personal experiences to assess whether the theory is practical. The story, once told, often becomes an icon or symbol that is brought out and restoried to further our understanding of classroom phenomena.

Our group is not without purposes, although there are times when the quality of purpose is strained by the snug comfort of chatting about one's self to a group of caring individuals. We share common ground as educators and as women. The purpose of our inquiry is to improve practice by building on our understanding of the theoretical and practical contexts of education. Each of us will bring that increased understanding to bear in different ways that relate to our individual interests and experience. The data for our group comes from many sources. Our stories form a

significant basis, but we also bring in the stories of others, research articles, newspaper clippings, classroom resources and a plethora of life objects that contribute to our experiences.

The interaction of our group members' ideas often resolves into a dialectical relationship. Sometimes one of us will choose to evoke this relationship by "playing the devils' advocate." We attempt to expand the story to include the perspectives of other characters; to play with protagonist and antagonist to see if there is another way to tell the story from a middle ground that considers both sides. The stories involve sense-making around individual experiences where the personal knowledge of the individual is at odds with social or professional expectations. Rather than describe this as a conflict, we attempt to look at it as a dialectic; a deeper understanding of the different perspectives may result in the identification of a story that allows us to make sense of both the personal knowledge and the broader societal or professional context in which our knowing is embedded. Stories of teaching reveal the dialectics related to our individual and social contexts and the anomalies of our personal and professional lives. Embedded in these stories is knowledge about teaching, teacher education, and school curricula, both past and present.

**Individual/Social Knowledge**

We experience the individual/social dialectic as our self-consciousness/social-consciousness develops throughout life from early childhood experiences within a family context to the broader social contexts of school, work and membership in a variety of groups. We accumulate everyday knowledge through a process of social

interaction. As little children we learn the difference between right and wrong, safe and dangerous, good and bad through the language and actions of our parents. As we move into an expanding social milieu we add experiences and knowledge from a broader context. The taken-for-granted assumptions that worked for us in the family context are adapted as we experience increasingly diverse and ambiguous social interactions. We are challenged to bring meaning and sense to our own actions and the actions of others. As we experience anomalies between our values or beliefs and those of others we seek to clarify our own personal knowledge. This personal knowledge forms the basis for our actions in the social world as well as our stories about the world (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990).

Carr (1986) points out that experience cannot occur in isolation, "since my own action or experience is only a function and dependent part of a larger phenomenon whose genuine subject is the group" (p. 155). We are all members of larger communities that we interact with both directly and indirectly in the present. These groups have a past, present and future existence that is outside our individual existence. "Thus the individual's sense of self, which will presumably be different from each individual, is nevertheless essentially linked to the social past" (p. 116). Both the social and the temporal components are important to narrative inquiry.

Individual life stories can be similar, but the infinite variations of life phenomena make each of us as unique as snowflakes. Not one of us can say that any other human being, past or present, has ever had exactly the same experiences in life as another. Two individuals sharing an experience may focus attention and find

significance in very different phenomena, or they may focus on the same phenomena and provide very different interpretations. Stories of individual experience are an individual's representation of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, Schutz, 1970). These differences in perception and interest reflect individual differences in knowledge, values and beliefs that are constituted from prior experience.

Individual values, power relations, and meanings are encoded in language (Foucault, 1970, Popkewitz, 1987). When an individual tells a story the narrative emerges from the context of individual knowledge. As the story is told the values and beliefs of the individual are played out in the plot structure, characterization, language and action of the story. The sense of the individual as part of a society is also embedded in the story, providing clues to what is important and valued from a broader social context. The present story of an individual experience is another chapter in a book connected to past experiences of childhood, family, and broader social interactions, past and present. Research of individual experience should enquire into the dialectic between personal and social knowledge and the implications these have for building the story of a group from the narrative of individuals.

**Personal/Professional Knowledge**

Our personal knowledge forms the basis for our everyday actions. It is a blend of the individual/social interaction and is, therefore, dynamic. Personal knowledge changes as we discover through day-to-day experience circumstances which create a dilemma for existing values, beliefs, and prior knowledge (Schon, 1987, Clandinin and Connelly, 1990). Personal knowledge comes through experience and requires a

process of practice and reflection before day-to-day surprises can be turned into tacit knowledge. While we may know when we have practiced something successfully, we cannot be aware of all of the components to the phenomenon that made us successful (Polanyi, 1962). Personal knowledge requires a commitment to reflection and understanding of what can be known about an experience. "The effort of knowing is thus guided by a sense of obligation towards the truth: by an effort to submit to reality" (p. 62).

When joining a profession, personal knowledge is situated in a dialectic relationship with professional knowledge. Professional knowledge is specific to a particular group. To belong to a profession is to share a certain socialization process, usually mediated through an educational program and an opportunity to practice before qualifying for entry into the profession. The work of a professional is structured through specified practices, codified behaviour, and specialized language. Schon (1986) identifies the dilemma between professional training based on technical rationality "application of research based knowledge to the solution of problems of instrumental choice" (p.234), the separation of research from practice and the "indeterminate zones of practice" (p. 233) that require the practitioner to make decisions based on personal knowledge. Schon suggests that teacher practice falls outside the criteria of technical rationality inherent in professional training programs related to law, medicine, and business.

The dialectic between the personal and the professional emerges as the individual experiences the restricting structures of the profession through personal

practice. Teacher stories about curriculum, schoolboard policy, or the role of the teacher all reflect the dialectic between personal sense-making and potential hegemony of professional practice writ large. The practical choices that teachers make in day-to-day practice reflect their personal knowledge and well as their professional knowledge. Lyons (1990) writes about practice set in values and knowledge of the profession and the dilemmas that emerge in daily practice. "Dilemmas that come out of working relationships between people, like those between student and teacher, that are fed by the everyday interactions between them, that happen over time, and that have no real guarantee of success even though they require daily response and action" (p.165). "Many of the dilemmas of teaching are not solvable and must simply be managed rather than resolved" (p. 168). Lyons suggests that stories of teachers work that tell "of teachers' professional experiences and practical choices; like a text, they invite attention to their details, a starting place for understanding and interpretation" (p. 160).

**Past/Present**

It is a common experience for us to refer to prior events when dealing with a problem in the present. We test our ideas against events of the past to enhance understanding and to seek out potential causes for a phenomenon. Clandinin and Connelly (1990) suggest that while there are works on time in the field of sociology little has been done in this area as educational inquiry. Ricoeur (1988) writes that the past and the present "mutually condition each other" (p. 209) and that to accumulate knowledge from experience we must reflect on the past. Understanding the present or

imagining the future can be achieved through looking for the "traces" (p. 5) of an experience that reside in the past. These traces can be a means for interpreting and bringing meaning to our every day experiences. Perrone (1991) points out that "if we are not well connected to our educational history, we can lose sight of the dignity of teaching and its larger social context", (p. 120) and further, "without a strong historical base for our work, we easily lose sight of the social context that surrounds schools. And we lose the potential for constructing serious reform" (p.130).

Carr (1986) attempts to develop a theory of narrative and history and suggests that:

> Such a narrative context, connecting the individual with a larger social past can be seen as contributing essentially to the sense for the individual, not only of what he or she is doing but even more strongly of what the individual is. (p. 115)

Accessing stories of the past requires that we become "contemporaries of past events by a vibrant reconstruction of their intertwinings" (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 144). Narrative inquiry allows us to become part of the experience of others in the past and to add their experiences to our own knowledge when we seek to solve a dilemma in our present. The traces of the past in the present often affect how we think about a phenomena and what questions we will ask to enable our problem-solving. Searching back through these traces and reflecting on the meanings, power-relations and traditions that form the past roots for the present story allow us to question taken-for-granted knowledge about a problem and look at a dilemma from a new, expanded

knowledge base.

Creating an understanding of today's classroom is aided by this comparison with the past. Building a rich understanding of today's classroom from the context of teacher and student is an essential component of a critically-reflective process for the improvement of educational practice. This knowledge must be built not just on the texts of resources and curriculum, but on the text of stories about the classroom. To strengthen our understanding of the present and our ability to imagine the future we must come to grips with the stories of our past. Imagining ourselves in the classroom of the past, one that goes before our own experiences, requires some process for restorying the classroom of the past.

**The Process of Story-Building**

I have attempted to make the case that an individual is part of a larger social group that has a past, present, and future that are intertwined with the stories of an individual. An individual's stories reflect only one facet of a phenomenon as interpreted through that individual's personal knowledge. Inquiry into other stories about the same phenomenon will provide additional facets. Themes from one story may re-emerge in another story. Understandings may be similar or suggest a conflict. These are revealed by attempting to unravel the meanings of words and metaphors that make up the stories. Membership in groups will influence how stories are told, particularly with reference to common language, and shared meanings. Building a composite story of a phenomenon from the stories of individuals provides a broader understanding of potential issues, conflicts, and possible resolutions. Tracing the roots

of a phenomenon by looking at past stories provides further insight and potential for reform based on experience and multiple perspectives.

The data for narrative inquiry focused on individual experiences comes from stories collected through interviews and questionnaires that invite story-telling as well as from documents and reports. These data reveal the themes and values of the individual as well as the values of the larger social milieu. Plot sequence, characterization, conflict, and resolution can be searched out and used as a possible structure for a composite story. This story becomes the story of the researcher, authenticated by the stories of others, but subject to the same individualistic interpretation that emerges from personal knowledge. Unstoried materials (Clandinin and Connelly, 1990) such as curriculum documents can also be drawn into the new composite story to enrich the understanding of language and values that are inherent in such documents (Apple, 1988).

The process of analysis is repetitive. The experience of one story creates a broader understanding and increases the bases for interpretation. Each story reveals its own structure and themes. The building of the larger story is based on themes that come through strongly in the stories. Once themes are identified the data is looked at again to discover what is said about that particular theme. What are the common understandings? Is there common use of language? Are the experiences similar? Are there shared values and meanings? The questions themselves emerge as part of the process; they are not predefined.

A composite story is constructed from this reflection that encompasses the

researcher's interpretation of the individual stories of the phenomenon. The process provides an opportunity to better understand the experiences and values of others as they experience a phenomenon. It provides an opportunity to foster reflection and to increase understanding. This paper provides an example of the first part of this methodology; the story of Gertie Slavic.

**Gertie Slavic's Story**

Gertie Gallagher (Slavik) tells of her experiences as a teacher in early Alberta:

> To finance Normal, I'd borrowed money from the Government and my father co-signed my note. He'd a crop failure that year, and I worked out a very tight budget. I extravagantly had 30 cents, after my debts were all paid, to spend how I pleased. My father gave me my train fare, to Holden so I still retained my 30 cents.
>
> The train arrived at 9:00 a.m. for my first school in April, 1920. I waited hopefully for the Secretary who had said via telephone, that he would meet me. Noon came, and passed, and then the station agent inquired about whom I was awaiting. I named the Secretary and he surmised that he was probably at the hotel.
>
> Naively I went to the one hotel and asked if the Secretary was there. The office girl said that she would see. After a while she said he was in the hotel. I did not inquire what his business was there and returned to the waiting room of the station.
>
> About 4:00 p.m. he appeared with a cutter and a lively team. There was

still ample snow. He'd told me, on the phone, that the school was four miles from Holden. He did not communicate much so I remarked that it was a long four miles after we had travelled for some time. I was informed that it was fourteen.

Arrived at his home he suggested that I go to the house while he cared for the horses. I knocked several times - no answer - so he roared at me to enter. I opened the door and went in to the kitchen. There was a very pregnant women in the next room that apparently served as a bedroom and living room, with a child about three years. I greeted her but she did not respond. The child, however, came and kicked my shins smartly, and then ran back to his mother and hid in her skirts.

Presently, the Secretary entered and suggested that she show me my room. She did with the same rigorous silence. I was very hungry since I had not eaten since breakfast and I hoped that I did not frighten her into changing the quoted board after my first meal.

The school was a mile from their home via a blind road. Holden had been ditched. The snow was very deep and you had to go six miles to find a bridge across the ditching. My host inquired if I had ridden horseback. I had, so he gave me the most fiery horse that he owned to ride. I gave him his head and in about four miles of running, he tired, and was easily manageable. Next day I was given an old plug.

The school pupils looked like the League of Nations. They were

Ukrainians, Poles, Russians, Norwegians and Canadians of Scottish and Irish origin. Besides there were two illegitimates. An itinerant worker had fathered his two sons from an Oriental girl and a Negroid one. Some attended school in Grade 1 without speaking English, but I had plenty of interpreters. The Inspector suggested that I have fifteen minutes on Friday, before closing time, in which the pupils could recite, sing a song, or tell a story, because they were not accustomed to facing an audience and expressing their opinions. I asked the Negroid boy if he could sing. He and his brother had not been accepted by the other pupils. He sang a song so beautifully that the pupils encored him for 15 minutes. He and his brother were accepted after that.

We were cautioned to teach mathematical combinations, and to discourage counting. One pupil evidently counted but I could not discern how he did it. I'd have him extend his hands. I'd watch his eyes - it was not by these that he counted. I told the Inspector my difficulty and he volunteered to take math with that class and see if he could find the source. I sat back and observed the lesson - and found our solution. John was barefoot and he had mobile toes. He employed these to count. The Inspector taught him again to enjoy the fun. The solution was reached.

Suddenly it turned warm. In the morning, when I awoke, my arms were blotched with red spots. Examination saw that my body was also. Measles! Quarantine! I needed that cheque to supplement my 30 cents. In desperation, I threw back the bedclothing, and my measles all had legs - bedbugs!!! They

scurried for cover. I had arrange to go to town that Saturday to purchase 5 cent stamps to write my parents. I did have paper and envelopes. I went, instead, to the drugstore. I asked Dr. Hotson, the owner, if he had anything for 30 cents that would destroy bedbugs. He returned with a huge tube of powder. I protested that would be more than 30 cents. He answered, "I hate bedbugs! They are responsible for many of the illnesses I treat. Take this tube and I wish you good luck. Keep your 30 cents. I enjoy killing those parasites!"

My host put a ladder across the ditching (about eight feet deep, and the same wide). Now, I could walk to school. The sudden warmth melted all the snow, and one morning when I went to use my ladder bridge the water was deep on both sides of it. Necessarily, I would have to walk six miles, instead of the one mile to reach the legal bridge. I had not allowed for that stroll. A pupil, who was a severe myopic, had used my ladder bridge. He was coming so I called to him that the water had spread and that he could not use the bridge. He kept on advancing. When he reached the water he disrobed, tied his clothing on his head and swam across the water. The water was ice cold, and I am not a good swimmer, so I feared for his safety. He reached the other side, put on his clothing, and started off for the school. I called to him and told him I'd be late arriving on account of walking six miles.

Later, I was able to enlist Dr. Hotson's aid in obtaining glasses for the myopic through the Red Cross. When I told the doctor about him he said that his parents could not afford glasses but he would aproach Red Cross. He

obtained them and it made a big difference in Fred's learning to be able to see.

One child defied me, so I expelled him. Next morning, after school had opened I saw him and his mother coming in a buggy. She was a giantess. I anticipated a very thorough beating. I answered her knock and she had her son by the collar which she added pressure to his neck. "You must get down on your knees and 'pologise," she commanded him, "and if there is ever more of your foolish behaviour, I'll kill you!!" That was the finish of the defiance.

The Normal staff told us that we should visit all homes in our district. One home had several daughters and I enjoyed visiting there. The parents made and sold moonshine and enjoyed drinking it also. The mother had become inebriated and I was taken from room to room to avoid her by her daughters. She caught up with us in the kitchen. There was a very large slop pail there, half-filled with liquid waste. Her erratic gait lodged her in the slop pail. She was a big woman and she fitted solidly in it. We tried to help her out of it. As we pulled on her arms the pail would go "Gurgle! Gurgle!" This went on for a while and suddenly we heard a large, "plop" and she was free to stagger to her bedroom.

One family had grown tired of naming their children so they gave them the numbers from their language from nine on. Then the 13th arrived. They did not like the sound of 13 in their language so they named him in English, "Thirteen." Their English was broken, and when I went there I was asked if I knew what sounded like "thirtee." I disclaimed knowledge of "thirtee" and so

the mother shouted, "Thirtee, Thirtee!!" Presently, there appeared a very dirty child and she announced, "That's Thirtee!" When Thirteen became an adult, he changed his name. He was a boxer and I presume Thirteen meant bad luck.

I walked three miles, on Saturday, to be driven to church on Sundays when service was available. Because of my bedbug background, I'd change in the tool house, into their daughter's garments. She was about my size. When I went home, for the same reason, fresh garments were laid out in a tent and I'd disrobe and put on these in case.

Gertie (Gallagher) Slavik was a graduate of the Camrose Normal School in 1920. She told her stories of her first year of teacher some 68 years later when we contacted Camrose Normal School graduates to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the closing of the School in 1988 and asked them as part of the celebration to tell stories of their first years of teaching. I chose this particular story for a number of reasons. First, it has a true sense of a story. Gertie has sequenced her narrative to include setting, problem, plot, protagonist, antagonist, rising action, climax and falling action. Second, after multiple readings of all my current data this story seemed to capture many of the themes that emerged in other stories, interviews, or reports. Third, and most importantly, for me, there was an essence in this story that captured my interest. I am left curious about what the Secretary was doing in the hotel, although I'm pretty sure I know; but Gertie never says. I am surprised by her lack of rancour when she describes waiting for seven hours in the train station for the Secretary and her lack of censure when she is given a "fiery horse" to ride by the same Secretary. There is a

sense of the character of Gertie and the others in her stories.

**Story Themes**

I began to work through the story looking for linguistic devices that suggested themes about individual and social values or a dialectic between personal and professional knowledge. The 30 cents stands as a metaphor for the economic situation in Alberta at the time. It also served to reveal the character of Gertie and her relationship with her parents. Gertie intends to buy stamps with her last 30 cents to write her parents. She must change this plan when she discovers bedbugs. Bedbugs are to be battled against at all costs, suggesting that the conditions under which this young teacher was required to live were quite different than her own home life. Living away from home is a recurrent theme throughout the data, as is the boarding house theme, complete with bedbugs.

The Secretary represents a power figure, unconcerned about the plight of a young woman left to wait for seven hours at the train station. The long wait, without apology, the potential misrepresentation of the number of miles between Holden and the school, and the evident test of the fiery mount suggest a dark side to the Secretary's character. It is difficult not to turn again to a contrast between this young woman's upbringing and her boarding house life with the potential misogyny of the Secretary, the silent, brooding landlady, the spiteful child, and, of course, the bedbugs.

The Inspector is another power figure in Gertie's story. He is portrayed as a solution giver; one who restores the fun to the classroom. The two stories she chooses

to tell about him do not reveal any of the tension that one might expect between a school inspector and a nineteen year old teacher in her first year of teaching. He offers suggestions such as the Friday afternoon recitations; she implements them and sees a positive benefit. Her "Negroid" students are now accepted by the rest of the class. She experiences a problem with the counting student and turns to the Inspector to help her. Their problem-solving seems to suggest a partnership. He relieves her of her teaching duties so she can concentrate on identifying the problem. Once the mystery is solved, he works with the student to "again...enjoy the fun." This particular passage is very obscure and we are not sure just how this is achieved. This particular segment of Gertie's story is the first of two possible references to Gertie's teacher training. She indicates that she was "cautioned not to teach mathematical combinations, and to discourage counting;" and, later, "the Normal staff told us that we should visit all homes in our district."

Gertie describes her classroom as a League of Nations. She specifies their ethnic origins and makes reference to two illegitimate brothers fathered by an itinerant worker; one with an "Oriental girl" for a mother and the other "a Negroid" mother. I have read the relevant passage on this over and over trying to tease out a clear meaning. All I have been able to generate are more questions. Who did the brothers live with? Were they the same age? How did everyone come to know they were brothers? How did the community come to have such a multicultural mix? This type of passage is a good example of what can or cannot be known from such stories and how the researcher must work against the enticement of making up her own stories

around interesting findings.

What can be known is that Gertie characterized her classroom as multicultural. There is no evidence of a racial bias on her part, although there might be a suggestion of racial stereotyping. There is a suggestion of some form of bias on the part of her students. They don't accept the Negroid or his brother. There is nothing to clarify whether the lack of acceptance is because of the brothers' racial origins or because of their illegitimacy. Gertie has recognized this lack of acceptance as a problem and her story about the "Negroid boy" resounds with the timbre of a happy ending when she announces he and his brother are accepted after all.

Gertie offers us three stories about the parents of her students. The giantess characterizes the support that parents provided teachers. The story of the inebriate, like the stories of the Secretary, reveal more about Gertie's character. Here is a young woman following the edict of the Normal staff and visiting the homes in her district and writing of these experiences with humour but without malice. She mentions in particular enjoying her visits to the moonshine producing parents. There is a possible suggestion of loneliness in this segment. She likes visiting this home because they have several daughters. There is little mention of companionship in her story and one wonders what Gertie did outside of her professional responsibilities to keep from feeling lonely and isolated.

There is a recurrent theme of travel throughout Gertie's story; getting to Holden by train, travelling to the school by cutter, (there is still ample snow), riding a horse and later walking to school, walking and then catching a ride to Church,

without bedbugs of course. Getting from place to place is not easy. Great distances may have to be dealt with and both students and teacher must adapt as the season changes from late winter to spring. Gertie tells the story of the naked myopic student swimming the ditch. She calls after him to let the students know she will be late; she has six miles to walk rather than one. It is typical that Gertie makes no comment of her feelings in this matter. She appears to accept the inevitable, does not choose to adopt the myopic student's solution. Embedded in this anecdote is the whole problem of the climate of Alberta and its potential impact on the role of the teacher and schooling in Alberta.

As I have read and reread Gertie's story I have tried to understand her experience and to bring some meaning to what Gertie represents as the main protagonist in her story. The stories she tells provide me with some evidence of her relationship with her students. Words like intrepid and stoic come to mind when describing Gertie; but, I sense that she would not approve of my emotional embroidering and it is, after all, Gertie's story. Her values and self-concept are driving forces underlying the telling.

Gertie's relationship with her students is particularly puzzling. The myopic student does not heed her advice to not cross the ditch. He has his own solution and is not about to be directed by his teacher. Her warning appears to have been as one equal or to another, or perhaps as an inexperienced female to a knowledgable male. She accepts passively his possible disobedience and asks him to tell the other children she will be late. Later she does something that no one else in the community has

bothered to do. She arranges in cooperation with the community doctor for Fred to receive glasses. She tells of a multicultural classroom and suggests that her students acted as interpreters for her. She likes to visit a home in the district where there are many daughters and conjures up an uproarious scene of an inebriated woman staggering in the wake of several young females who are scuttling from room to room to avoid her. Gertie is not treated as an honoured guest but, rather, as one of the girls, with, perhaps, special status. She appears as neither parent nor child, but somewhere in the middle.

**Gertie's Personal/Professional Knowledge**

Gertie's story offers us the opportunity to come to an understanding of her personal and professional knowledge as a young woman embarking on a career as a teacher. As she leaves the relatively security of her home and family she is faced with a totally different social environment. Her short period of teacher training has provided her with some knowledge of curriculum and instructional strategies, but her story suggests that as she deals with each situation that emerges she is drawing from a rich source of values and beliefs that have more to do with her experiences as a lower middle-class female than as a trained professional. The role of the teacher within the community is evidently a shared value between Gertie and the unfamiliar community in which she teaches. Gertie knows what is expected of a teacher in this strange community even though she is constantly surprised by new experiences and unfamiliar values and beliefs. Her powerlessness within the community is evident in her interactions with the Secretary and parents. This is counterbalanced by her

indomitable spirit as she accepts the experiences that face her. Gertie is a teacher both in the classroom and in the community.

Gertie is almost silent on themes that relate to professional knowledge with the exception of her implicit knowledge of the role of teacher. There is almost no mention of curriculum or classroom resources and Gertie's stories focus on her relationship with the community and the ways she went about solving the problems of her individual students. If Gertie's story is typical of the stories told by others who taught in the same time period then it can be expected that we will learn more about the role of the teacher than about teacher education or school curricula from the past.

This story has become the beginning point for the development of my story of teacher practice in early Alberta. Whether Gertie's experiences were typical or uniquely different will be revealed by including the stories of others and documents from the period into the plot structure. The result will be a composite story of teaching, teacher education and school curricula in early Alberta. But that's another story.

References

Apple, Michael W. (1988). Teachers & texts: A political economy of class & gender reflections in education. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall.

Bennet, Henry E. (1917). School efficiency: a manual of modern school management. Boston: Ginn.

Berger, Peter L. & Luckmann, Thomas (1966). The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge. New York: Doubleday.

Carr, David (1986). Time, narrative, and history. Indiana University Press.

Clandinin, D. Jean, & Connelly, F. Michael (1990). Narrative and story in practice and research. Educational Researcher June-July.

Foucault, Michael (1970). The order of things: an archaeology of the human sciences. New York: Vintage Books.

Lyons, N. (1990). Dilemmas of knowing: Ethical and epistemological dimensions of teachers' work and development. Harvard Educational Review. 60 (2), 159-180.

Polanyi, Michael (1962). Personal knowledge: Towards a post-critical philosophy. University of Chicago Press.

Popkewitz, T.S. (1987). Ideology and social formation in teacher education. In T.S. Popkewitz (ed.), Critical studies in teacher education: Its folklore, theory and practice. Philadelphia: Falmer Press.

Schon, Donald A. (1986). Toward teaching a new epistemology of practice. In B. Checkoway, (ed.), Strategic perspectives on planning practice. Toronto: Lexington Books.

Schon, Donald A. (1987). Educating the reflective practitioner:Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

## Stories of Teaching from the Past:

## Building the Story from Multiple Perspectives

> It is important for those who study personal experience to be open to a rich and sometimes seemingly endless continuum of events and stories and to be prepared to follow leads in many directions and to hold them all in inquiry contexts as the work proceeds. Experience is messy and so is experiential research. (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992, p. 12)

### Introduction

Gertie Slavic, a graduate of the Camrose Normal School class of 1919, began her career as a teacher in Alberta in 1920. Gertie tells stories of her first years as a teacher, moving from the familiarity and security of a middle-class farm family into an isolated Alberta community whose culture was almost foreign to her. Gertie's relationships with the community, her students and their parents as well as the other members of the school system are revealed in her stories. The values, beliefs and experiences that constitute Gertie's personal knowledge create a tension between her prior knowledge and her experiences as she joins a new and very different community. Gertie is only one of many teachers who shared similar experiences as teachers in the first few decades of Alberta's history as a province.

Their stories exist for us not just as memorabilia or as a way to satisfy our nostalgia for a simpler, more robust society. They exist as an opportunity to make sense of our present by delving into the past. The stories connect us to our educational history and help us to sustain a view of teaching, teacher education,

schooling and curriculum in a broader social context. They sustain us in our knowledge of the dignity and essence of being a teacher and the knowledge that we are all members of a larger community that stretches backwards and forwards from our own individual experience (Carr, 1986, Clandinin & Connelly, 1992, Perrone, 1991). By creating a vibrant reconstruction of the intertwined stories we share in the experiences of others in the past and add their experiences to ours. Our concept of the role of teacher, schooling and curriculum can be traced back to their beginnings through the stories of Gertie Slavic and others to provide a means for interpreting and bringing meaning to our every day experiences (Carr, 1986, Ricoeur, 1988).

Stories of early teaching practice reveal the dilemmas that teachers faced in their day-to-day practice. These dilemmas emerged out of interactions between the storyteller and various members of the community (Lyons, 1990). They are stories of professional experiences and practical choices that relate to the role of the teacher, her personal knowledge, and the nature of schooling. The "official" record contained in Department of Education Annual Reports and other texts related to the teacher education curriculum and the school curriculum provides an interesting counterpoint to the stories of teachers. They are often at odds in terms of point of focus and subject, revealing the multiple perspectives inherent to the various components of an educational system.

Building a composite story from the past gives us access to diverse stories from the past without the opportunity for collaboration with individual storytellers who are no longer with us. Any story told about an experience is necessarily about something

that has happened in the past (Carr, 1986). But, the stories of an 80 year-old reflecting on experiences 60 years ago are adapted by personal knowledge accumulated over her lifespan. The interpretation of these individual stories into a larger story that includes others puts the researcher in the uncomfortable position of presenting someone else's words to support interpretations that cannot be taken back to the story-teller for confirmation or refutation. Can such an enterprise be said to fall within the ethical stance taken by narrative inquiry to collaborate in the development of a story?

The composite story takes on many levels and becomes the story of the researcher making sense of the multiple stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). Polanyi (1962), writing about personal knowledge, states "A mental effort has a heuristic effect: it tends to incorporate any available elements of the situation which are helpful for its purpose" (p.62). He also suggests that the "effort of knowing is thus guided by a sense of obligation towards the truth: by an effort to submit to reality" (p. 63). These stories, then, are my available elements. My restorying seeks to search out the truth; to tell the stories of others. In doing so, I hope to develop new insights into social issues that surrounded schooling in Alberta's first two decades as a Province. The data included here constitutes excerpts from Department of Education Annual Reports, interviews with Normal School Graduates collected at the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Camrose Normal School in 1988, and questionnaires, and letters written by practicing teachers who taught in the first 50 years of Alberta's inception as a province, collected over time since the late 1970s.

**Building a School System in a New Province**

Alberta's emergence as a province within the Dominion of Canada in 1905 came at the midpoint of a massive wave of immigration to western Canada. New settlers arrived from eastern Canada, the United States, Great Britain and continental Europe. Some were able to transport goods and tools and take up work similar to their previous occupations, but most were starting a new way of life in a strange and often hostile land. There are many accounts chronicling the hardships endured by these new Canadians. Edith Solberg provides a story about her parents' move to Alberta:

> My father came from England and my mother was born in Ontario. They moved to B.C. and Dad worked in the mills there. Then he decided that wasn't for him. So, he came to Wetaskiwin to a farm some miles west of Wetaskiwin. He had never been on a farm before. He had never even driven a horse. So the farming was quite new to both of them. The first year that he was there, we lived in a . . . sod house. I was born in the sod house. It rained all that summer and they said they had to keep me under the bed to keep me dry.

Edith's parents, like many other new Albertans, learned to carve out a living in a raw new territory. Survival depended on how quickly they could develop the skills necessary to produce the essentials: food, clothing and shelter.

The polyethnic mix of immigrants who came to Alberta at the turn of the century became a permanent part of Alberta's cultural identity and influenced the public policies which evolved as the new province began to formulate a governance structure, particularly with respect to education. Educating immigrants to be loyal,

productive citizens of the British Empire would ensure the economic future of the nation as well as protect the boundaries of Canada from encroachment by the aggressive economic power of the United States. The newly formed province set about to actively develop a school system that served to build a sense of nationalism, individualism, and democracy rooted in British-Canadian values in the population of the province. At the time of attaining provincial status Alberta had 560 organized school districts with 24,254 students attending. By the end of 1906 the number of school districts had increased to 744. 28,784 students were taught by 924 teachers who earned an average annual salary of $614.13. D.S. Mackenzie, Deputy Minister, in the first report of the Department of Education marks this progress.

> One of the most satisfactory and hopeful features of the past year is the progress made and interest manifested in the organization and maintenance of schools among the foreign elements, especially in the Ruthenian colony east and north-east of Edmonton. (Alberta Education, 1906, p.12)

The vibrant enthusiasm for meeting the challenges of nation building on new and fertile ground and the recognition of a strong educational system as a tool for nation building is expressed by G.E. Ellis, Inspector of Schools for the Edmonton School district:

> I may say that if the influx of settlers continues as it has during the past two years there will soon be no land within 100 miles of the capital that will not be included within the limits of some school district, notwithstanding the thousands who are finding homes in the remote northern districts of this fertile province.

> Such should be a pleasing feature, not only to the Education Department of our own province but to the whole Dominion. (p.55)

While the governmental infrastructure was in place to encourage the development of schools, the settlers themselves provided the impetus and the tax base for the opening of new schools. Elsie Thompson, a graduate of Camrose Normal School in 1913, remembers:

> During the early years of the province, homesteaders were pouring in from all over. When there were 8 children of school age in a district--I forget the exact size of area specified, but so no child would be more than 3 miles or so from a central point--the settlers could request a school and it was usually built. Bachelors usually opposed, not wanting to pay the tax. Some were glad to have a school which would bring in a new young woman (usually) and a prospective wife.
>
> No schools in this area kept open full school terms, but kept going as long as the tax money lasted. With a small population, and low tax rate--this being new homestead country, with very little land under cultivation--taxes were only some $10.00 per quarter section, for school purposes, and about the same for municipal purposes.

While policy may have specified that no child should have to travel more than three miles to school, the journey was not an easy one. Edith Solberg's story about her first years of schooling captures some of the adventure of the new province, and perhaps some of the fear experienced by a little girl in a very big world:

> Then, it came time for my brother to start school. It was a case of walking a mile and a half . . . across prairie, with just a small road--no fences, and a lot of cattle grazing around there. He went for a year. Then, in the spring of 1907, they decided that I could go with him. I wasn't quite six yet, but it was alright with the teacher if I went, so we'd walk to school. There was a little creek we had to go across if it was wet. Dad made a pile or row of bushes across that creek so we could get across without getting wet. I bet they were always scared silly that we were around there. We'd hide in the bush every once in awhile, probably because we didn't want to go where the cattle were.

**The Alberta Climate: A Challenge for Teachers**

The climate and the undeveloped Alberta prairie posed many difficulties for children and teachers, some of them life-threatening. Gertie Slavic tells of spring thaw and the additional water in a ditch rendering a makeshift winter bridge unusable. One of her students avoids walking the additional six miles to the proper bridge by removing his clothing, balancing the bundle on his head and swimming across the ditch. Severe winter conditions posed an even greater problem. Verda Ullman tells of a snowstorm that nearly ended in tragedy:

> By Monday morning the December weekend blizzard had blown itself out, leaving behind all roads blocked and the thermometer out of sight. The Chairman phoned that he had closed the school for the week, that his janitor son would not unlock the door and build the fire, none of his children would be allowed out of the house, and that he, his older son, son-in-law, and hired man

would not go beyond the barnyard. For him the matter was closed but not for me. I ignored the protests and pleadings of my boarding house friends and after the snow was shovelled from the door and a path made to the barn, I emerged.

Over my own winter clothes, I wore borrowed men's moccasins with three pairs of woolen socks, men's gauntlets with two pair of wool mitts, my father's beaver fur hat, my mother's muskrat coat lining, a large wool scarf wrapped around my head and face, and I carried a wool blanket to put over my lap and legs. With difficulty I stumbled to the waiting horse, was helped onto the back of the little buckskin and together we plunged through the four miles of drifts. When we arrived at the school barn, I fell off. There was no other way to dismount. I struggled with the barn door, loosened the girth and with effort reached the school, unlocked the door and built my first fire in the pot-bellied stove. I then went to care for Buck and get more coal. As I returned, I saw the five children trying to drag and pull each other. Climbing over drifts, falling and getting up, I reached them. The two youngest had just laid down and wouldn't move. I carried the youngest, the older girl dragged the other. We struggled to the warm school room. All five were numb from the cold and had frost bites to be treated.

Later, after they were warm and had lunch, I wondered what we should do. Suddenly their father dashed into the room. When he saw his children were safe, he burst into tears. In his European mother tongue he explained he had not known it was so cold until he went to do the chores. He had quickly hooked up

the team but the roads were so bad that often he and his two older sons had to walk to lighten the load and help the horses as they floundered in the snow. After their blankets and stone foot warmers were warmed the family started for home.

Left alone I relaxed with a library book. I finished it, glanced at the clock and saw it was 3:30. I had been oblivious to time, storm and my town friends. I was expected back before noon. Quickly I put out the dying fire and bundled up. Somehow I managed to tighten the girth and scramble onto the back of the restless horse. I hung on while he lunged and plunged until we arrived at his barn door.

I was filled with remorse when I heard my town friends blamed themselves for letting me go and that my mother had spent most of the day in tears while my concerned father tried to comfort her. I had little satisfaction in knowing that the pupils of my very first school could depend on me. However there was some comfort later when my parents and town friends said they could understood why I had gone.

I don't know whether the chairman of the board ever knew I had opened the school door he had officially closed.

**Establishing Standards**

Much of the work of the Department of Education at this time was focused on establishing standards for school facilities and teaching. Regulations were developed to encourage a minimum standard of quality in each of the school districts. According

to these standards in 1906 a school would be built on at least an acre of land in rural districts and one-half acre in towns and villages. The shape would be approximately twice as long as wide. The grounds "levelled and kept clear of all underbrush, weeds, rubbish, etc.," (Alberta Education, 1906, p. 67). Sanitation and a decent water supply were important considerations. The regulations of the Department of Education required:

> Separate privies, under different roofs, shall be provided for the boys and girls. They should be separated by a close board fence at least six feet high, and their entrances should be effectually screened from observation. The outhouses shall be kept in a cleanly condition and in good repair. (p. 67)

The policy does not specify how the latter is to be accomplished, but one suspects the role of the teacher might include this important responsibility. Children were provided a place to store outer clothing and lunches:

> A roomy porch or inner cloak room should be provided for the children's hats and wraps. The hooks used should be strong and firmly fixed to the walls. Shelves for dinner baskets and stands for a wash basin and a water pail should also be provided. (p. 68)

The dimensions of the classroom were also carefully set out in the regulations "to allow at least fifteen feet of floor space and 200 cubic feet of air space for each child." Blackboards warranted an extensive policy statement which required "at least sixty square feet of blackboard space" (p. 69). The board itself was to be:

> at least four feet wide and not more than two and a half feet from the floor, and

should extend across the room behind the teacher's desk...At the lower edge of each blackboard there should be a concave shelf or trough three inches wide for holding chalk and brushes. (p. 69)

Classroom equipment was also covered in Department of Education policy. The type of blackboard must be slate, hyloplate, cloth, plaster or wood, although the wood or cloth blackboards were recommended for temporary use only. In addition:

> Every school shall be provided with the prescribed school register, a globe, ball frame, dictionary, map of the World, map of North America, map of Canada, map of the Province of Alberta, a suitable supply of blackboard brushes and crayons, a thermometer, clock, broom, pail and cup, wash-basins and towels and one or two chairs in addition to the teacher's. (p. 69)

Deputy Minister MacKenzie noted a marked improvement in school equipment during the past year. This improvement, he surmised, was in part due to The School Grants Ordinance "whereby an additional grant is made to school districts reaching at least the minimum grading based on inspectors' reports" (p. 14). There were seven school district inspectors at this time. These individuals were responsible for visiting the schools to assess building and equipment quality, the competence of the teacher, and the progress of the students. If a school achieved minimum standards the district was rewarded with a grant. One-half of the grant was to be spent on the purchase of library books. The school trustees were empowered to decide on how to spend the remainder.

The availability of such funds seems to have contributed to the financial success

of a group of sharp salesmen intent on wresting this hard-earned money from the naive hands of school teachers and trustees. J.W. Brown, Inspector of the Medicine Hat School District, reports:

> The graded schools are as a rule well equipped for public school work, while excellent apparatus for the teaching of Science in the High School departments is in many cases provided. It is a matter of regret, however, that the trustees in the majority of rural districts were during the year beguiled into buying expensive equipment that is not only unnecessary but absolutely useless. (p. 40)

Inspector Boyce of Red Deer notes that the special grant has had a tremendous influence on school improvement and suggests that the grant be increased from 15 cents per day to 25. Inspector Thibaudeau of Lacombe is less enthusiastic:

> The equipment is fairly adequate to the needs of the school. But it is irritating to find many instances where school boards have been allured by oily-tongued agents into buying almost useless apparatus, especially highly-coloured maps, paying double prices. One-quarter of the amount, spent wisely, would give better results. (p. 47)

Department of Education Inspectors played an important part in maintaining standards in schools across the province. They were imbued with significant authority and both teachers and students viewed them with awe. To many of the rural school children inspectors must have appeared almost as alien beings so different was their manner and dress from the children's experience. Edith Solberg recounts her childhood impression of a school inspector:

> Mr. McNally, he was our school inspector while I was in public school. I suppose I was maybe in grade six or seven, probably about grade six the first time he came. I'll never forget that! He came in and was walking up the aisle. I looked at his shoes and he had such shiny, new brown shoes; and, they had points up on the top. I didn't know that was the style. I thought, my he must have bad feet. He must have a terrible corn!

**The School Program**

Part of the responsibility of the school inspector was to ensure that the school program was appropriately delivered. The school program, or rather programme, was organized into eight standards. Students passed from standard to standard by successfully completing examinations set by the department. The program might be modified to the special needs of particular schools only with the consent of the inspector, who was required to report such changes to the department. The teacher was expected to develop a timetable based on the standards and "to present it to the inspector, at each visit, for his approval and signature" (Alberta Education, 1906, p. 79). Subjects were taught as discrete areas of knowledge, although some integration was encouraged. In most cases the text was prescribed.

The description of the program related to the study of history makes it quite clear that the relationship between curriculum and government goals was a close one:

> Training of the moral judgment, and preparation for intelligent citizenship are important aims in teaching history. History should be associated with geography and literature - historical poems, etc. (p. 83)

Students were expected to accomplish these goals by studying the biographies of famous men and by memorizing significant events in Canadian and British History. The reading and recitation of "patriotic poems" was considered an important part of the student's learning.

A vision of the ideal citizen is suggested in a course on manners and morals which constituted part of the Programme of Studies.The topics of Manners and Morals were an exhaustive list of:

> Cleanliness and neatness, politeness, gentleness, kindness to others, kindness to animals, love, truthfulness, fidelity in duty, obedience, nobility, respect and reverence, gratitude and thankfulness, forgiveness, confession, honesty, honour, courage, humility, self respect, self control, prudence, good name, good manners, temperance, health, evil habits, bad language, evil speaking, industry and economy. (p. 92)

The teacher was instructed:

> to see that the pupil practises those external forms of conduct which express a true sense of the proprieties of life and that politeness which denotes a genuine respect for the wants and wishes of others. It is his duty to turn the attention of the pupils to the moral quality of their acts and to lead them into a clear understanding and constant practice of every virtue. (p. 92)

The teacher was to accomplish this by providing a role model and:

> the narration of suitable tales to awaken right feeling; the memorizing of gems embodying noble sentiments, and maxims and proverbs containing rules of duty;

direct instruction, etc., (p. 92)

Elsie Thompson, a 1913 Camrose Normal School graduate, describes school facilities, teaching and the curriculum from a teacher's perspective:

> In the old-time country school, there was only time for basics. If a child learns to read, he can educate himself, should he desire. In those schools, the main thing was the 3 Rs--including spelling, writing, grammar. There were no 'teacher's aids.' In my first school there were several large cards with simple words in large print: dog, cat, hen, etc. In one or two schools, I found a globe. No library, or other aids of any sort. We taught history of Canada, geography, simple physical science.
>
> Last period on Fridays was usually special, with perhaps a bit of art, singing, or a spelling bee. And during late fall and early winter there were great preparations for the Christmas Concert, of songs, recitations, little plays or drills. Each child had some part, and in small schools they each had several. Normal School had not prepared us for that.

**Teacher Education**

Ensuring a qualified teaching staff was a significant problem for the Department of Education. Teacher training was primarily provided through the Course of Studies for Normal Schools which was an extension of the Standards I through VIII, taught in most schools, prior to the conversion to a graded system. Many schools did not provide schooling beyond Standard VIII. It was often necessary for students to continue their education away from their parents by boarding in urban settings. Elsie

Thompson was one of these students:

> On passing grade 11, one could apply for a permit good for a year, to teach. Then he/she must attend one term of normal school, when one received an interim certificate--if one passed the tests. After another year of teaching, and two favourable inspector's reports, the permanent certificate was issued. This was for teaching only the public school grades 1 to 8. Grade 12 students had the same conditions; but, upon completing normal school training, received a first class certificate, enabling them to teach high school.
>
> One good thing about teaching on a permit. Those who found they did not want to make a career of teaching, gave up and went on to something else, without having wasted a year of that training. And with what education they had, they could teach the lower grades, at least enough that it was better than no school at all.

The Department of Education attempted to increase the supply of teachers by shortening the Normal School program and increasing the number of sessions offered in a year:

> The rapid increase in the number of school districts in the province together with the short period of service of the average teacher necessitates the holding of two short sessions of the Normal School during the year. (Alberta Education, 1906, p. 37)

Normal School Principal, George J. Bryan, acknowledges the inadequacies of the shortened program:

> While it is impossible to deal with these subjects at great length, still we endeavour to create a certain attitude towards method and subject-matter, - the critical attitude which does not accept as Gospel the dicta of educational writers or rest content with common practice, but which puts all things to the test and desires to hold fast that which is good. It is not possible, even if it were advisable, under present conditions to put into shape the matter and prescribe the method that must be used at every stage of the pupil's development. We cannot, if we would, send forth teachers who are fully equipped at all points, who possess all that is required for successful work in the schoolroom. (p. 37)

In spite of Bryan's recognition of the limitation of the Normal School program, he clearly had a vision of what a teacher should be and that he felt the Alberta teacher education program met the needs better than programs for teachers trained in other provinces. "As a consequence these teachers find some difficulty in interpreting our Programme of Studies and in discovering right methods of teaching the subject-matter outlined therein" (p. 37). Inspector Brown of Medicine Hat supports this view:

> many of the teachers have not received their professional training in the West and have met with difficulties in interpreting our Programme of Studies; in fact in some cases no attempt has been made to follow the prescribed courses. (p. 41)

The low wages and primitive conditions of most Alberta schools had an impact on the type of individual attracted to teaching. George Bryan's report gives faint praise, "as a rule, those who come to us have good reasoning ability and possess

adequate scholarship, still their power of expressing the thoughts that are in their minds is not so commendable" (p. 39).

Normal School students were young, mostly female, and single (married women were not permitted to teach). Paying for their education was often a hardship for parents, both in the actual cost for tuition and room and board as well as the loss of a helping hand in the family home. Agnes Dixon explains why she chose teaching:

> Well, when I was young there wasn't much choice in careers. I thought I'd like to be a nurse or a teacher, but I decided I would . . . School was always such a pleasure to me. I enjoyed every year. Learning came so easy for me, that I was always happy at school. I wanted to be able to earn my own living a soon as possible, so that I wouldn't be a big expense to my father, who had a big family to support.

Edith Solberg always wanted to be a teacher. "In public school, I often was asked to give the spelling classes, or help with the other kids - the smaller kids with their arithmetic. So I started teaching before I started high school."

The time spent at Normal School may have been only a few months but for many of the young women who attended it was a rite of passage marking the transition between childhood and the taking up of adult responsibilities: Elsie Thompson shares some of her experiences:

> Arriving in Camrose, we found it was impossible to get a boarding place. Besides the Normal School students, there were high school students from the surrounding towns, and students at a College. We spent the first week at the

hotel, while we and some of the school staff tried to find accommodations for us. Finally an elderly couple agreed to take us. They had a high school girl, her second or third year there, but had another bedroom large enough to put a single bed in, besides the double one there. But since we had to leave so early, Mrs. C. would not provide breakfast. For a while we went to a bakery on the way home after school and bought some buns or rolls; but, that, with no other food, butter, milk, coffee, or such, and no place we could keep anything, we soon gave up and did without breakfast.

Mrs. C. was a wonderful cook, but at each meal, family style, there was one serving of potatoes, one piece of meat, one serving of another vegetable, one slice of bread, and one serving of dessert. We were absolutely starved all the time! Perhaps you remember what the appetite of a teen-ager is. We were afraid to ask, even for another slice of bread! They might tell us to move out, and there was no place to go.

Coming from school one afternoon, Mrs. C. called us to the kitchen, as she was frying doughnuts, and asked if we would like one! Would we! We thought we knew what heaven would be like--there would be doughnuts. That evening both Mr. and Mrs. C. went out to a church meeting, and the high school girl also went out, so as we were in our room doing homework, we thought of the doughnuts and decided we would get one each. Alone in the house, we still took off our shoes and tip-toed down stairs, to the pantry, each took a doughnut and started upstairs. Suddenly one of us stopped and said, "I

wonder if she counted them?" We stood, looked at each other for a minute, then crept back down and put the doughnuts back.

There were no spare periods in our school day, so our studies and homework took until about 11:00 each night. Our room, and the stairs, and a storage room took one half of the upstairs. The master bedroom and the other girl's room, and the bath took the other half. One main pipe from the furnace went to each half. The damper in 'our' pipe was kept shut, so we were always cold. We snooped one day and found out about the pipes, and opened the damper to our room. But, the next day, it was closed again. We wore our coats while doing our homework or writing letters home.

We did manage to take Friday evenings and Sundays off--or Saturday evening, so we took in a few shows, met a few boys and had a few dates, including a Sunday afternoon drive (team and buggy) to the big trestle at Duhamel.

Edith Solberg remembers the hard work:

It was only a four-month term and they were cramming so much into it that we didn't have any time to do anything but study. There was no socializing to speak of, just among the few of your close friends, but not as a whole...

Everybody went there to learn, and they learned. They knew that this was something that had been working for. This was sort of the climax and they wanted to make the most of it. We all worked. Of course, there was a lot of fun things that would happen, but nothing really big. There was the literary Society

. . . Then, we had programme and that was interesting. Funny little skits and music and singing and things like that.

In spite of this hard work many normalites such as Edith Solberg felt the program did not prepare them for the classroom experience:

> I think the thing that helped me the most at the Camrose Normal School was learning how to make the timetables. That was the most important thing that I learned, because most of the rest of it--there was a lot of technical stuff, but most of it you had to figure out as you went along. It was something that grew with you rather than put into your head.

Edith did feel that the psychology part helped:

> Well, I think mainly about what the kids think and a little bit of that kind of thing - how they thought. That, I think, helped a little. I had grown up with kids and I kind of knew how they thought. I was the second one of seven. So, I had all these younger ones to get accustomed to kids.

Marguerite McLean also enjoyed the psychology:

> It was a new subject to me. Mr. McNally gave a class I believe it was school management. He didn't approve of kindergarten . . . Other subjects were discussed. I really enjoyed them all. Art, House Ec., a lot of busy work like paper folding work with card board weaving. It was practical examples of what could be done in a classroom <u>but</u> the school boards were so short of money unless one bought the supplies oneself you just didn't have any.

Agnes Dixon's term at Normal School was interrupted by a 'flu epidemic.

Yes, I had to go home. And at home, were Mother and Dad, three sisters and a brother. I didn't get the flu. Mother and Dad didn't get it. But the other three were sick. So, we had to do the best we could to nurse them. And Dad was busy helping, doing chores for neighbours. It was a terrible time. But we did the best to help our neighbours. There were so many deaths! I knew so many, yes. Then, when the worst of it was over, we were asked to come back to Camrose. In the first two months, we spent our time with books, studying. When we came back, they told us we didn't have to write any exams, not at all, and do only practice teaching. And then, when that month was over, I got a permit to teach. So I went home and there was a brand new school a quarter of a mile from home. I got a school right away. I was only nineteen years old! But I got a school right away . . . That school, well, it was pretty - It was a brand new place, you know, with the white clapboard, the windows on one side, and desks--an ordinary one room school.

**Stories of Teaching and Evaluation**

Agnes tells of how anxious she was to do a good job. "There were inspectors from Edmonton that visited all the country schools. And they checked on the type of work you were doing."

Edith Thompson's first job was:

only a short distance from where the town of Barrhead now is. I received $68.00 per month, and paid $20.00 per month room and board, and shared a bed with my landlady, who was working away from home. My mother was ill

most of that time, so I went home, either by horseback or in a buggy, escorted by a boy friend. Usually, there was a dance on Friday evenings at a nearby hall, and we went to that first, getting home so late that it wasn't worth while going to bed. My father would have started yeast, so that I could bake bread. I would also do a washing, do as much cleaning as I could, and on Sunday I did the ironing, baked cake and pie for the week, before going back to my boarding place for the next week.

Edith taught multi-grades:

Well that was the common thing. You taught your lesson and gave seat work on the lesson. The children had to either . . . well they had to do seat work on that lesson, whatever it was. If it was spelling, they had to learn their spelling. If it was history, they had to make notes or study that and be able to do it. For literature, it was the same thing. When we were teaching it we would underline a lot of words that perhaps they didn't know and they would have to look those up in the dictionary and write them down. There was always seat work that you'd find. I would combine perhaps grades 1, 2 and 3 and have a picture-story with that. Grade 1's would have really quite a nice picture, because you could send away and get these. I would take them all as a class and they would have to find things on that picture and see how many things they could find on it. We'd talk about it and make up a little story about it. The grade 3's would have to write their story. The grade 2's might have to make a list of all the things they saw. The grade 1's would maybe have to make a little drawing

of something that was on there.

We had a catalogue. I don't remember where you'd send, but they had beautiful pictures that you could get. Often, I'd get a picture of a painting and different things like that. They were really nice pictures. I'd try and get them with children on and things like that. Once in awhile, well . . . just things like that. So, they learned how to write and make sentences right away.

Catherine McMillan tells of her first years of teaching after graduating from Normal School in 1911:

The first year I had a rural school composed almost entirely of Germans and Ukrainians. There were 52 of them sitting two or three in homemade seats. They used slates only. They had text books, bought by their parents. There was no library. I taught the lesson, then the GR. VII's marked them and helped them with their difficulties. I told them not to whisper, but talk very low. They did.

If the day were fair I gave the juniors long recesses supervising them from the window as I taught the senior grades. With the permission of parents & Board the Juniors were dismissed an hour early while I taught the seniors. I took 1/2 hour for lunch and taught the seniors from 12:30 - 1:30. It was a long day, but the Children were so eager it was very rewarding.

The system was changed that year from "books" to grades so in the "wisdom" of a teenager with no experience I placed them in Gr.1 . . . chronologically and told them I did not know where they should be, but hoped to soon find (out) but it was up to them to <u>prove</u> that they should be promoted.

Some of those "Grade ones" were in Grade 5 before the end of the year.

Elsie Thompson's first school was at Glenreagh:

> There were 8 students, aged from 7 to 15 years. A couple had had a year or two in the U.S., while one or two had had a bit of instruction at home. With the text books we had, for Alberta schools, and the curriculum I spent most of that term just getting the students correctly placed in their grades . . .
>
> I had never heard of teaching 'phonics', so had to devise my own system which was largely 'look and see', plus the alphabet and sounds, so that later I found I'd been teaching partly 'look--see' and partly phonics system. When the inspector visited the school, he helped explain phonics, demonstrated how to teach it, etc. However, I was never able to teach the youngsters by that system alone, so continued mostly in my own way. But I did teach them so that they could read.
>
> The same inspector came to my school in Freedom some years later, and was very concerned because of my failure with phonics. So I gave another demonstration with my 3 Grade 1 students. After 15 minutes or so, he dismissed school. It was near dismissal time. He told me that, if I could teach children to read, to do so in any way I could. In the class, one child had recently come from Germany and knew no English. Another was slightly retarded. The third was normal, but very shy.

Inspectors appear to have been a mixed blessing for teachers. Marguerite McLean recalls:

We needed two good reports before our certificate would be permanent...The last week I was there, (Luxemburg School) the whole school (about twelve) came to meet me. As I was driving I hurried up thinking something was wrong, but it was to announce that the inspector had just arrived. They were quite concerned, until I assured them that the inspector had just come to see if we were doing nicely or not.

Another inspector at Hockenheim was Mr. McLean--that time I felt embarrassed. My watch was a half hour wrong with his. We were out for noon when he came and by his time it should have been about 11:30. One did not have much way of checking one's time--no radio, no phone, etc. I shouldn't have let that upset me.

Elizabeth McKitrick tells a less positive story that occurred in her first teaching assignment in Ketchamot after completing grade 11:

I went down at Thanksgiving time to that first school from high school. And when I got off the train in Tofield, waiting to get on the train was my teacher that I'd had in standard 5. Like what would be called the last year of public school. He was getting on and I asked him--was anyone in from Ketchamot and he says "I didn't see anybody." But he says, "if you go over to the hotel" and he pointed out where the hotel was, he says, "Somebody will call for you there." And he got on the train to get to Edmonton. One week later, or on the Friday of the next week, he and his wife came to inspect me in the school . . . And when he came in, of course--and his wife took a back seat--he went up to

the front and he said, "Well you can sit down here on this front seat." So I sat down and he started on the classes asking them all the questions about what they had studied and all that. And I had only had them for one week. Well from Tuesday to Friday, really. And he said--the secretary, when I went back, showed me the report--he said he was disappointed in my work. And I didn't say a word in front of him, I mean I didn't teach a class. And he knew that I had just come down the week before. I never really got over that. Because that went in to the Department on the inspector's report. And I didn't get a copy of it but the secretary did you see. And he was disappointed in my work.

The problems and focus for school inspectors were contextual, made up of their interests and values and the problems of their particular school district. Inspector Ellis of Edmonton dealt with twenty-two new districts in 1906, comprised primarily of Galicians and Russians. The problem of teaching children who did not understand English was significant in Ellis' school district at the time. Ellis takes a particular position on the use of anything other than English as the language of instruction:

> While it may be an advantage to a teacher to know the foreign language, I believe it should never be used in the presence of the children. The progress of the class will necessarily be slow at first, but the teacher will accomplish more in the end by using the English language exclusively. (Alberta Education, 1906, p. 53)

Ellis is not inflexible in his opinions

> In one of the French districts, the teacher (a French-Canadian) had what she

called her French and English days, which meant that on the English day the children talked nothing but English from the time they reached the school in the morning till they went home at night. She started with one English day in the week and gradually increased the number till after about two months they were all English days. The teacher was on hand at recess to supply the English word when the pupils did not know it. While some may think that it should be English from the start, I may say that this teacher has had very good success. (p. 53)

J.W. Brown, Inspector of the Medicine Hat School District, felt that rural school teachers "have not been able to withstand the evidently deadening effect of teaching half a dozen pupils day after day" (p. 41). Brown takes a particular interest in Nature Study and suggests that the teaching might be on more practical lines. He makes the following suggestion:

> The pupils should be able to recognize a noxious weed when they see it, to know its true name and its habits. The noxious weeds in the locality in which the school is situated should be collected in all stages of their growth, critically examined, pressed and labelled.
>
> Collections of seeds should also be made and their characteristic shapes, colours and markings carefully noted. These seeds may be preserved for further reference in small bottles of the same size and neatly labelled. The boys and girls of the rural districts will thus have an opportunity to assist their fathers in examining seed grain in order to ascertain if any weed seeds are included. (p.41)

Inspector Smith of Calgary echoes this concern, claiming that the teaching of the

Nature Study should be more practical. "Very little field work is done in any of the schools by teacher and pupils" (p. 43).

Elsie Thompson bases her success on experience and practice rather than prescribed methods:

> Normal schools and university can help someone along the teaching career, but neither can make a teacher. One must go back in time, thinking of the teachers one liked, and the ones who were disliked, study their ways in the classroom, and outside, try to make use of the good ways, and the not-so-good. Study why we liked, or disliked them, and learn from that. And remember your own years as a student, remembering children have not changed greatly, so try to think as you thought when a child. I think the greatest thing for a teacher is a sense of humour!

**The Role of the Teacher**

Teachers were expected to be role models in other ways within the community. But, according to Edith Solberg, not really leaders:

> I wouldn't say a leader. Your role was to kind of keep friends with the parents of the pupils. That was important, because then you had the family backing all the time. They were pretty strict about that. You didn't have inner school problems, because the parents knew what was going on.

In an earlier work I recounted the story of Gertie Slavic. She expelled a student and was confronted the next day by the mother. Rather than receiving the beating she anticipated from this "giantess", she received an apology from the offender, who was

told by his doting parent to behave or be killed.

Gertie provided some insights into community life for the teacher. She copes with her loneliness and isolation from her own family by visiting the parents of her students - - a behaviour recommended by the Normal School Staff. During these visits she is treated somewhat like an older daughter or sister rather than as a leader or authority figure both by the parents and her students. Marguerite McLean provides a story that reflects the multiple roles of the teacher in the community:

> In our time, the teacher did the janitor work and started the fire, which meant one went to school early. Some schools paid $10 for this, but usually it was part of the job. The question was - should one sweep at noon hour and raise dust or stay after school? I usually did it after school. Also, I marked work after school. At noon and recess time I often played with the children. They loved to have me come out to play. I felt some of the children led rather dreary lives. I brought newspapers and books to school, anything to add a little more interest.

Marguerite attempts to add some colour into the children's lives by organizing a Christmas concert:

> The one year I taught right through was the only time our school had a Christmas concert. We practiced at noon and as the mothers were busy, I put all the girls' hair up in rag curlers the night before the concert. I brought curtains and all sorts of things from home to fix a stage. The children were so happily excited. Always I found the children cooperative and ready to learn anything new.

Elizabeth McKitrick sums up the role of the teacher, both in the classroom and in the community:

> Well, you always did what you thought was right at the moment anyway, as you would in any situation. It's up to you to do it, whatever way that you felt was most satisfactory for whatever you are doing. I know at that same school though, it was during the war in 1915-16 and we put on a big Red Cross concert in the school. A few of the pupils took part in that. I put on a Christmas concert first, at Christmas-time in there ...the board or neighbours came in and they built a big platform and we had a Christmas tree on the platform and brought in chairs. Somebody dressed up for Santa Claus and brought gifts and treats for the children and we had a good time out of that.

**Individual/Social Values**

Four themes emerge from the stories as factors which might affect the socialization of teachers as they move from their childhood and family context to their roles as teachers. The first is the harsh physical and economic conditions under which Albertan children grew up. The image of Edith Solberg and her brother trekking across the prairie at ages five and seven underlines the independence expected of young children. Edith reconciles her fear of the cows by deciding that they were probably just as afraid of her. Parents tucked their babies under the bed to keep them dry from the summer rains, built makeshift bridges over waterways to shorten the trip, and sent their children off to school in the severest winter weather, while they got on with the difficult task of making a living in a new and challenging land.

Children were conscious of the hardships their parents faced, trying to make a living in a new land. Agnes Dixon is concerned about the burden placed on her father to provide for a large family and looks to a career in teaching as a way to contribute. Many young women attending normal school did so only at considerable sacrifice on the part of their parents. They became accustomed to living frugally and making do with the materials at hand.

Edith's story about her father trying mill work first and then settling on farming, in spite of the fact that he knew nothing about farming, suggests that Edith was comfortable with the notion of trial and error. Young children such as Edith would become accustomed to seeing their parents try something, fail, and try again. One did not give up if something didn't work right; one tried something else and got on with life. The whole concept of learning from experience was a day-by-day occurrence. Success was accepted, without pride, as an appropriate reward for hard work. Failure was treated as a place to begin from, not a reason to give up.

Throughout the stories there is a recurrent theme of a strong commitment to family. Even after moving away from home and entering the teaching profession, daughters continued to return to the family home and take their places, not as the upwardly mobile young professional, but as a young daughter or sister, subordinate to parental authority. Return was not to simply get a good meal and enjoy the comfort of friends and family, or to escape the dreary and often undesirable conditions of their room and board. Often, they travelled long distances on the weekend to provide support during illness, or to perform domestic duties such as laundry and baking.

These stories convey an image of stalwart individuals who do what is needed when it is needed and who don't complain. There is also a sense of subordination. The young woman fits into the family not as an educated leader, but as a young sister or daughter who, in addition to family responsibilities, teaches.

Community represents another factor of socialization for the teacher. It is evident throughout the stories that sending children to school is highly valued, in spite of the fact that there is almost no recognition within the curriculum of the diverse needs and experiences of the school population. There seems to be a general valuing of education on the part of the community with an acceptance that others, primarily of British background, know best when setting the contents and processes of the curriculum.

The response of the community to the young teacher appears to be an extension of the subordinate role played within the family. The stories suggest that these women were usually in their late teens or early 20s, came from families of limited means, and often took teaching positions that isolated them from family and friends. Loneliness and isolation are suggested in many of the stories. Gertie Slavic visits the families of her students and is welcomed as an older sister rather than a distinguished guest. She faces the "giantess" parent and expects a beating for expelling his son. Elsie Thompson casts the young female teacher in the role of prospective wife for the bachelors of the community. Marguerite McLean puts the girls' hair up in rag curlers the night before the Christmas concert because the mothers are too busy. Edith Solberg makes it clear that while teachers were not expected to be leaders they were

expected to be role models and that parents were extremely supportive of the teachers.

The curriculum represents another factor in the socialization of teachers. The Department of Education recognized schooling as a tool for kneading together a diverse, independent population and moulding it into the ideal British-Canadian citizenship. The values encapsulated in the curriculum reflected this standard without any attempt to build on the knowledge or reflect the experience of students. The assumption was that because these individuals did not speak English they were ignorant; because they did not read English, they were illiterate. Schools and teachers were the primary interface between the "foreign elements" and the social and cultural values of the province. The curriculum served as a template for good citizenship, both for the teacher and the student.

The curriculum was treated as an external body of knowledge, prescribed by an arm of the government and regulated through the mechanism of governmental exams. The setting of standards rather than grades reinforced the assumption that mastery of a body of content was the appropriate pedagogic stance. There was an assumption that the values inherent in the British social structure such as honesty, integrity, and morality were not shared in other societies and, therefore, much of the curriculum was directed at teaching these values. The implication is that the foreign element would be overcome by providing strong, morally upright models. The teacher was expected to embody the values inherent in these models.

**Personal/Professional Knowledge**

Each of the narratives reflects the experiences that moulded the lives of our storytellers as they grew up and entered teacher training in Alberta. It is evident from Elsie Thompson's story of the doughnuts that growing up may have come after the completion of teacher training. Indeed, the first-year experiences of teaching may have contributed significantly to that process of becoming an adult. In many cases the personal knowledge of the individual and the behaviours that enacted this personal knowledge were in conflict with the professional knowledge that would be passed on to them through the experience of teacher education, the actual act of teaching and the standards set by both the curriculum and the school inspectorate. Several examples of the dialectic between personal and professional knowledge emerge.

The Normal School Principal, George J. Bryan, has the impression that teacher education students are bright enough, but they haven't learned to speak up for themselves. He also suggests, given the shortened program and the multiple demands placed on a teacher, that it is not possible to deliver a teacher education program that will fully equip teachers for every student's need. Instead, he would like to develop teachers who can think critically, challenge "common practice" and, through a process of testing and assessment, "hold fast that which is good" (Alberta Education, 1906, p. 37).

Our storytellers' memories of their first years of teaching often end with the comment, "Normal School didn't teach me that." There are some particularly good examples of this related to special community events, Christmas concerts, recitals, and fairs. Yet, Edith Solberg identifies events in Normal School such as skits,

operettas, and recitals that might be considered as modelled experiences to teach how to organize special events. Many of the storytellers mentioned learning how to develop timetables as useful. Marguerite McLean likes psychology, but finds that some of the skills taught in Art and House Ec. were not useful because the school boards could not afford the necessary materials. Edith Solberg makes sense of the "new psychology" by placing the theories within the context of her experiences as the second eldest of seven children. She characterizes the Normal School program as "a lot of technical stuff, but most of it you had to figure out as you went along." Elsie Thompson recognizes the value of role models and uses her own experiences as a student to build on her understanding of effective teaching by studying teachers, both the ones she liked and the ones she disliked, and by reflecting on how her studies can add to her own understanding of effective teaching.

If, as George Bryan suggested, the intent of the Normal School program was, in part, to engender a tolerance for trial and error, the first-year teaching experiences of Normal School graduates would suggest that the program goals were on track. The school program presented many dilemmas for teachers. Our storytellers identify three such dilemmas: (1) the lack of materials to teach the curriculum, (2) developing teaching strategies that met the needs of the students, and (3) the problem of slotting children with diverse needs and backgrounds into the organization of the school program.

Many graduates from Normal School accepted positions in one room multi-grade schools as their first-teaching assignments. Agnes Dixon was thrilled with her first

job; she was nineteen years old and managed to get a brand new school close to her family home. Most first year teachers were not as fortunate, in spite of the rigorous standards set by the Department of Education related to school facilities and resources. Catherine McMillan talks of teaching 52 students, sitting two and three to each homemade desk. Parents were required to buy the textbooks, and there was no library. Both Marguerite McLean and Edith Solberg confess to buying from their own resources--no small sacrifice on a beginning teacher's salary. Others tell of starting the school year without chalk and Elsie Thompson started her teaching with a globe, no library and no teacher's aids. There seems some dissonance here between the stories of the teachers and the reports of inspectors who report the schools as fairly well equipped and disparage the "oily-tongued agents" who dupe rural school boards into purchasing expensive, almost useless equipment.

There are numerous pictures associated with the stories collected that bear witness to the teachers' stories. These pictures highlight the disjuncture between the standards set by the Department of Education and the decisions taken by school boards, which, in fact, financed the major portion of school costs. The Department of Education would authorize grants but those were awarded only to schools that met minimum standards. The school community was expected to shoulder responsibility for financing schools through its tax base. The roots of disparity in school facilities that exist today between the have and have-not communities of Alberta can be traced to these first decisions for distributing responsibilities for schooling among the Department of Education, the community and the teacher.

The Department of Education set out the Alberta school curriculum with almost the same attention to specificity as the standards for school facilities and resources. In addition to the contents of the curriculum, the Department of Education also directed how subjects would be taught. In spite of this, Elsie Thompson points out that in the one room schoolhouse there was only time for the basics. To Elsie the most important skill was reading. Once the child had accomplished this skill he "could educate himself." Elsie Thompson talks about not knowing how to teach phonics, a strategy prescribed by the Department of Education, and having to devise her own system. She doesn't, however, lose sight of the goal. She is there to teach the children how to read, not how to do phonics.

The stories that many teachers tell are not so much about the curriculum or instructional strategies as about day-to-day problem-solving as circumstances, students, and teacher come together in the classroom. Edith Solberg discusses in detail how she worked out ways to differentiate for different ability levels in a multi-graded classroom. Catherine McMillan describes her coping strategies which included using the older students to grade the work and teach younger students. Many teachers tell of using older students to act as translators for the non-English speaking children in their classroom. All of these teachers added to their personal and professional knowledge through day-to-day practice.What they discovered as workable was not based on the rhetoric of the curriculum or the prescribed strategies or what an inspector set as a performance standard, but on the needs of students and the values that they, as teachers, brought to the classroom.

School inspectors provided a perspective on schooling that was not always in agreement with teachers. J.W. Brown suggests that the one-room school has a deadening effect on rural teachers, yet teacher stories of one-room schools are vibrant and full of satisfaction as teachers work through the daily problems and come up with solutions. Teachers' stories about inspectors suggest that this difference in perception could at times be problematic. Elsie Thompson's failure at teaching phonics is matter of concern for her inspector. He discovers through his own attempt to teach the children that Elsie has worked out an effective strategy and wisely advises her to do it her way. Ellis exhibits similar respect for the teachers' way of knowing in his description of the French-Canadian teacher who disagrees with his position regarding English as the only language of instruction. Marguerite McLean is concerned because her watch is wrong, but not really concerned that she will receive a negative assessment. Gertie Slavic employs her inspector to help her solve the problem of the counting student.

Regardless of the comfort level that the teacher had with the school inspector, the school inspector held a tremendous amount of power. The continuation of a contract and the award of certification rested on his assessment. Perhaps the saddest story is the one told by Elizabeth McKitrick. At age 93 after a long and successful career as a teacher including numerous leaves to upgrade Elizabeth reflects back on her experience with the unjust assessment of the inspector at Ketchamot. Her voice quavers as she retells the story. She has never gotten over someone's disappointment in her work.

**Conclusion**

Like any good yarn, the stories of these teachers have left me wanting to know more. I have touched on the dialectic between the standards set by the Department of Education and the socio-economic reality of providing schooling in Alberta. The standards would appear to be somewhat like the ideal of democracy--something to work towards but never an ideal that one expects to wholly achieve. The inspectors who reported on these standards apparently understood this working toward as opposed to meeting the minimum requirements, in spite of the fact that they had the power to recommend grants based on a checklist of standards met. It is questionable whether the political manipulations that are potentially present in such discretionary authority would lend themselves to the development of a strong school system based on democratic ideals or whether the evils of capitalism weren't already at work, ensuring that the rich get a significantly better education than the poor.

There is another aspect to the role of the inspector that raises my curiosity. When inspectors evaluated teachers, they were not required to provide the teacher with feedback. Two forms of reporting are evident. Inspectors reported extensively to the Department of Education. This document would be available through the Queen's Printer. But, it is unlikely that many teachers spent the time, effort, and money to obtain a copy. The second form of reporting resulted from school inspections for the purpose of assessing the teacher's performance. A report was submitted to the secretary of the board who could decide whether or not to share it with the teacher. It seems, once again, that the inspector had tremendous discretionary power in how he

interacted with the teacher. This leaves to individual choice whether the school inspection would provide the opportunity to work with the teacher in a developmental style or to provide punitive reports which could be presented without any supporting empirical evidence. What an opportunity lost for mutual feedback; the inspector, as the major source of feedback to the Department of Education on what's working in the schools and the teacher as the major interface between schooling and the student.

It is difficult not to write of these young women teachers as heroines, although they would be impatient with my nonsense. They began with a goal to teach which they achieved in spite of limited resources, limited training, a harsh climate and a hegemonic system that did little to help them other than impose rigorous standards that were difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. The role of Alberta teachers today can be traced to these roots.

References

Alberta. Alberta Education. (1906). *Annual report*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.

Carr, David (1986). Time,narrative, and history. Indiana: University Press.

Clandinin, D. Jean, & Connelly, F. Michael (1990). Narrative and story in practice and research. Educational Researcher June-July.

Clandinin, D. Jean & Connelly, F. Michael (1992) Personal Experience Methods. In Lincoln & Denzin (eds.), Handbook of qualitative research.

Lyons, Nona (1990). Dilemmas of knowing: Ethical and epistemological dimensions of teachers' work and development. Harvard Educational Review. 60 (2), 159-180.

Perrone, Vito. (1991). A letter to teachers: Reflections on schooling and the art of teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Polanyi, Michael. (1962). Personal knowledge: Towards a post-critical philosophy. University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, Paul. (1984). Time and narrative. Vol I. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, Paul. (1984). Time and narrative. Vol II. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, Paul. (1984). Time and narrative. Vol III. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## Dorothy's Story: The First Two Years of Teaching.

> It is often in a conversation with another person that we are best able to reflect on the meaning of a particular situation. But conversational reflection too can only be practised by distancing ourselves in time and space from the experience that becomes the subject of our reflection. In everyday life we tell each other stories about the experiences we have had with children. This telling and retelling of anecdotes can be seen as a form of practical theorizing in which . . . teachers spontaneously engage. (van Manen, 1991, p.116)

### Introduction

In 1989 I took partial leave from my administrative position in the Faculty of Education to teach social studies in a junior high school. When I first decided to teach for a year, it was not to do research; I simply wanted the experience. I believed the knowledge gained would inform my other personal and professional experiences and make me more effective in my work. During the year I engaged in conversations with my teacher-colleagues about teaching and schools and curriculum. These conversations were a doorway through which I gained knowledge from others with deeper and richer teaching experience than my own. I kept a journal of my thoughts and experiences during the year, realizing that events were happening at such a rapid speed that I would need to somehow preserve my thoughts until I had time to reflect. As I began to compile the material for my dissertation on teaching and the social studies curriculum I found myself referring back to this journal to help me contextualize and interpret the teacher stories that were part of my data. I came to

understand this inquiry into experience and meaning as research, directed at building links between my experiences and the experiences of others and I recognized that the stories told to me and my retelling of these stories was a powerful part of this inquiry process (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; Shor, 1980).

**Conversations in the Staff Room:**

Many of my conversations took place in the crowded jumble of the Steele Heights Staff Room. I was a "travelling teacher" without a classroom of my own and so at first I spent most of my time during breaks and "prep" times in this room. This circumstance provided me with frequent opportunities to engage in conversations with the other teachers. At first, these were the guarded conversations teachers have with guests in their staff room. I was, after all, not really one of them. My affiliation with the University made them cautious. Would I attempt to establish myself as an expert? Did I think I was better than they?

Our conversations were about the day-to-day details that one deals with in the rough and tumble of the classroom. I shared my own frustrations and small victories with these teachers and made myself vulnerable to their potential disapproval or, worse yet, ridicule--teachers can be brutally frank. I sought out their advice and support and we began to develop a mutual trust. They realized I was not different than they were and that I did not think of myself as superior in status. I was willing to take on the same responsibilities and workload as they were and did not seek special privilege because of my "guest" status. There came a point when I felt part of the group, accepted as an equal with all of the rights and responsibilities of group

membership.

Our conversations expanded to include family, friends, politically incorrect jokes, and stories of teaching. They wanted to know how I came to be with them and I wanted to know how they came to teaching and how on earth they survived. I can't pinpoint when it happened, but I can remember that at the same time I felt a growing satisfaction at being accepted into the group I also felt a faint dismay at my loss of objectivity, a feeling of disloyality as I moved further away from the abstract rationalizations of administrative behaviour that allowed me to make sense of the structures that control the educational system and entered more deeply into the life of a teacher. I found myself adding my voice to complaints about the system, laughing with others at acrimonious jokes levelled against the principal or the superintendent, and resenting any teacher given special status over the rest of us. The deeper I went, the less sense I was able to make of the system. Frustration, anger, and fear became familiar to me in a new context, that of a teacher.

**Dorothy Makinen**

Dorothy Makinen was one of the teachers I met in my year of teaching. When I first ran across her, the day before school was to open, she was talking to her ten year-old daughter as she tacked up pictures in her classroom, a hodgepodge of cuddly animals and safe-sex posters. She introduced her daughter and handed me a poster to hold. I felt I had been accepted at face value and came to treasure the opportunities I had to spend with Dorothy because of this sense of acceptance. My knowledge of Dorothy grew as we shared our worklife. She impressed me as a particularly strong

teacher with a no-nonsense attitude. She was prepared to take on difficult students, angry parents, and unreasonable administrators with a straight ahead "no bullshit"[1] style. When I visited her classroom it was evident that she was an excellent teacher, knowledgeable of the subject, with effective teaching and management strategies and possessing the intelligence to cope with a continuously changing curriculum. But the best part of Dorothy was her relationship with her students. Dorothy cared, not just about teaching well and making her students feel successful, which she did, but about how to help students at risk--students who were battered, pregnant, or potential suicide victims. Kids came to her and just talked. Dorothy helped.

Dorothy is a story-teller. Her stories were rich with the values and beliefs that she carried to her teaching. These weren't just colourful and amusing stories, although Dorothy's stories are always colourful. They were her interpretation of experiences that related to the life of teaching. Through her stories and anecdotes Dorothy revealed the kind of teacher she was, what she valued as an educator, and how she understood her responsibilities as a teacher (Jalongo, 1992; Lyons, 1990). When Dorothy told me her stories and as I watched her teach, I became increasingly curious about her early teaching experiences. Part of my research data was comprised of stories collected from Normal School graduates at a class reunion in 1988. These were stories of first-year teaching from the period 1914-1930 told from the perspectives of retired teachers reflecting across a broad expanse of time and experience. How would Dorothy's early stories of teaching compare with the stories

---

[1]These are Dorothy's words describing herself.

of these individuals? I imagined Dorothy sitting with this group of teacher-elders at the staff-room table. They would have much to talk about. The themes in Dorothy's stories revealed a common experiential base that connected Dorothy with a broader community of teachers past, present, and, potentially, future. This knowledge of stories from two time contexts enabled a two-way flow of meaning. Dorothy's more contemporary stories informed my interpretation of the earlier stories and the stories from the past provided me with a basis for recognizing themes that had persisted in teacher stories over an extended period of time (Carr, 1986; Ricoeur, 1988).

The stories that follow are my retelling of Dorothy's stories in the context of my own research. My study uses narrative to understand the experience of curriculum with the understanding that such experience may be perceived differently by groups or individuals that constitute the various communities within an educational system, such as parents, teacher educators, curriculum designers, teachers, and school administrators. My focus is on individual experience, using the concept that experience is both individual and social and that communities have individual and social qualities (Dewey, 1938). Stories, then, tell not only of the individual but also of the communities to which the individual belongs. My stories and the context of this research shape the retelling of Dorothy's story. My research interests are active in the selection and highlighting of events that comprise the story of Dorothy as a teacher in the larger historical context of teaching (Carr, 1986; Perrone, 1991).

## Dorothy's Story

### The Trip to Little Buffalo

I took my first job in 1977 at Little Buffalo School in the Northlands School Division. Little Buffalo is northeast of Peace River. I had never been so far north. I trained in Alberta as a secondary teacher and practice taught Grade 10 and 11 social studies. I had an education certificate but not an education degree. I had applied to virtually every school board in Northlands and Little Buffalo was the only one that offered me a contract. I wanted to work, so I went out there. I'm really sure Northlands was happy to get anybody. I don't think there were any Alberta teachers applying. I thought I would teach, get a year's experience and when I got a permanent contract then I could go somewhere else. The education students I talk to now wouldn't consider going to such a remote area; they would "sub" forever in a city. I've always figured I don't like living in limbo so I would accept the contract and then I would have choices and take control.

I got in my car with my little dog and we drove north; and we drove and we drove and we drove. Finally, after five hours, we got to Peace River. I went to a gas station and asked the attendant how to get to Little Buffalo. After he stopped laughing, he gave us directions. When I left town the first thing I saw was a detour sign which I took and ended up lost in the bush somewhere. Eventually, I found myself in a spot where there was a curve in the road and some buildings that looked abandoned. There was nobody around anywhere and there was a mud trail; a two rut road heading east for as far as the eye could see. I thought, I'm not going down there

unless I'm sure it's the right direction; not after I had already spent five hours in the car getting there and another hour being lost. I'm not driving down there unless I'm absolutely sure it is the way to Little Buffalo.

Eventually, this old ancient tractor came plodding along. I hollered to the guy atop, "Is this the way to Little Buffalo?" He just shrugged yes and didn't answer me. I thought, okay, here I go off on this road, just the dog and I, going along forever. I found out later it was only 45 miles, but it seemed forever on that muddy dirt road. Little Buffalo was literally at the end of the road. You could tell the school yard because all the buildings were blue. Every one of the schools in Northlands is sky blue; like it's the only colour of paint they ever buy.

I pulled up to an ancient trailer which served as the teacherage and went in to meet the roommate with whom I would be living for the next ten months. The trailer was just an old tin box set on the ground; no cement pad, just steps going up to the trailer. The first thing I noticed inside was huge purple and pink mactac flowers all over the kitchen cupboards. I opened my mouth and took a breath to say the first thing to do was get rid of those gawd awful flowers. As I took a breath of air, my new roommate said, proudly, "Oh, I just thought I'd brighten it up a bit and put these flowers up."

These were the most primitive conditions you can imagine. The rent was $190 per month deducted from my salary; which was a heck of a deal because it included utilities and accommodation. At least it seemed okay unless you realized that the outside walls were only two inches thick and let in the great outdoors. The water was

so bad that you never took a bath because if the water was more than three inches deep you couldn't see the bottom of the tub it was so slimy. So we took showers in what looked and smelled like slough water. We would go into Peace River on the weekends and bring back drinking water because we refused to drink the foul, rusty-coloured water. Sometime later, one of the health nurses asked casually whether they ever had been able to get the lead out of the water. We were never told there was any risk. The heating was awful in the trailer, the propane would freeze in the winter. I remember on one weekend, in rotation, but thankfully not at the same time, we were without water, heat, and electricity.

I was rather nervous about what I was getting myself into. I had grown up being a little twitchy around natives. I grew up in a small town and I went to school with native kids, but they were all very separate. Well, I can't say I didn't ever associate with them. I had friends who were native, and in grades four and five my best friend was a native, but, I had never really gone to visit them because they always lived out of town. It's funny I was so nervous then because I wouldn't feel at all insecure being in a native community now. To this day if I were to see two drunken men in the street, if one was a native I don't think I would be afraid.

I can remember the first few nights going to bed hearing noises, or imagining noises outside. One wall of the trailer was a blind wall with no windows. I would hear, or imagine, noises and think about all these stories of wild and crazy natives and imagine they were going to shoot us up or burn the trailer down. My dog was a scottish terrier, a couple of months old. She would just start barking so you never

knew what was out there. She'd be growling and barking ferociously and we'd be imagining the worst. I remember one night we did hear noises outside. We didn't have a telephone and there was no way we would go outside to see what it was and you couldn't see anything through this blind walled trailer. We were just terrified. There was something out there right up against the trailer. We didn't know if half the community was right outside our door. The next morning all was quiet. We got up to go to school and around our whole trailer on that side in the mud was nothing but footprints or should I say horse hoof prints. A herd of the local horses wandered through and I guess they had been rubbing up against the trailer and scratching themselves. That was really funny and after that we weren't really so twitchy.

**The Community**

Northlands has the school board that takes over all the small communities that don't have their own tax base. Little Buffalo is in a place called Lubicon Lake, where they still don't have a treaty signed. So they were treaty indians without a reservation. Most of their family members had been transients; hunting, trapping, and fishing and they were only there because of the school. The Quakers originally created the school in 1939. The Fall that I got there was the year that they had the road built. The year before it was fly in only. It was quite isolated. The community wasn't really into a lot of contact with the white population. They lived a very simple life style and worked hard picking cones in the summertime for forestry and trapping in the winter. Most of their food was provided through hunting. They also had government make-work projects where they were to make their own homes, which was kind of disastrous,

because the homes were like big huge shacks that ended up looking more like unfinished basements.

There was one lady in the community, Mrs. L. In the 1940s Mrs. L had a baby and the baby was sick. The nurse or the doctor came in and flew off with this baby to a hospital in Edmonton. That was the last that Mrs. L ever saw of her baby. She heard news that the baby died, but that was it. She vowed that her kids were going to be educated enough that they would never have that situation happen to them. She wanted them to be enough on the ball, enough educated so they could stand up for their own rights. So she was a real strong force in the community. By the time I was there she was a grandmother. She worked like a trojan. She would come in and clean the school.

**Life for Teachers in the Community**

The community was used to having a lot of teachers come, stay a year or two, and then move on. A lot of the teachers for Northlands were first or second-year teachers recruited from the Maritimes. There were few teachers from Alberta. The Alberta teachers were all very content to hang around in cities and wait until they could get a job there. So they had a lot of either first-year teachers, teachers from the Maritimes, from far away, different places where they absolutely couldn't get jobs, and you had the real eccentrics. My roommate was a real eccentric. She taught grades one and two. She didn't like certain things; so, what she didn't like she didn't teach. She didn't like particularly teaching social studies so she taught art all the time. One continuous art project after another. We were very lucky that the teacher aides were a

little bit more on the ball. They would take care of more of the curriculum.

There was no entertainment. The radio station was 65 miles away and it was awful. You couldn't get any television; there were no satellites then. There was a mobile telephone in the school. When the siren would howl you would grab your shoes, grab your coat and your black rubber boots, run across the perpetually muddy school yard, unlock the school, run in, unlock the telephone room, run in, and 95% of the time the operator would be saying, "I'm sorry there doesn't seem to be any answer there" and because you had to press to talk and release to listen you could say all you wanted and if she wasn't listening she couldn't hear. To make a call you had to wait until the channel was clear and meanwhile listen to all the guys on the oil rigs talk to their girlfriends. It was pretty bizarre. If you ever did get on the mobile phone, anybody with a cb radio could pick up your conversation and the few people who did have television and were willing to watch snowy pictures all the time could also hear your conversation being broadcast over their television. So there was no such thing as privacy.

Being the teacher, I'd go into town and we'd stay at friends. I met a girl that taught at Peace River so I would stay with her. I was always conscious about the image of being a teacher and yet my roommate was always going crazy and being the drunken rowdy. It was like Laurel and Hardy when we went to town. I tried to put as much space between the two of us as possible. Everybody knew you in a small town. It was really funny--you'd start getting a little crazy. One time my friend who was a teacher in town told me I was labelled as a home wrecker. She explained when I

asked what on earth she was talking about. I guess sometime I had danced with some guy who unbeknownst to me was married. So here I am--this guy asked me to dance and I danced with him and now I'm a home wrecker. In a small town its open season for everyone to have rumours about you. You just have to project a particular image.

**The Students**

I found that the students were better behaved and more academically inclined than I would have ever given them credit for. They were friendly and positive, but still shy. One warm day in the Fall around the end of September, or maybe October, because everything was gold and brown outside, these little boys came into school. I was at my desk preparing or marking or something and I looked up and these little boys are sort of shuffling in and looking around, back and forward so I called them over. So I'm trying to have a conversation and they're not saying much. Finally one of these little boys flung this bird on my desk and said, "Do you want a chicken?" They'd been out hunting prairie chickens with their sling shots and brought one to give me. I didn't know what to do because I had no idea what to do with it. Plucking and gutting a bird is not my idea of a good time. I ended up thanking them but saying that I didn't know what to do with it. They looked at me like I was this poor pathetic white person and took the bird away. When someone had gone hunting and shot a moose they would bring me a nice strip of the filet. I'm sure they thought because I was a poor white person they'd better give me some tender parts; otherwise I probably just couldn't eat it. So they would bring me stuff and never make a real big deal of it, just sort of show up and drop something off for me.

**Teaching**

When I applied for the job I said my training was high school social studies. When I got there I was shocked to discover that I would be teaching grades one and two. My roommate was assigned three, four and five, and the principal grades six, seven and eight. That was as far as it went. So we just decided to trade. My roommate said she'd rather do one and two. The principal decided he would teach three, four and five, and I decided to take over six, seven and eight. You had to teach so many minutes per week of social studies, language arts, etc., so using that we made up our own timetable. In the morning we'd start off with writing in a diary and then there would be some reading time and we just planned our day according to how many minutes we were required to teach in each subject.

The kids were just fantastic. Because they were in three different grades you couldn't really teach. I had four different levels for language arts and I taught the grade six, seven and eight math. I would teach language arts and math in three or four groups but they were all together for social studies and science because I just couldn't come up with the curriculum. We had math books and we had language arts books but there were no references really for social studies and science. For the unit on culture in grade seven social studies I can remember going through my University anthropology books on west coast Indians and coming up with definitions of culture and writing out notes, to give the kids a knowledge base. If I had to make notes for them I would have to first put them in a form that was applicable so the kids could read it, write it all out, and crank off copies on the old spirit duplicator. It took

hours. I would try to get in film and other things but we had no hard resources that we could use for social studies or for science. It took a lot of time trying to find stuff.

My classroom was a portable that had been tacked on to the other building. I think there were only two or three classrooms and one was being used for the kindergarten. So there were just no facilities. There was an entry room and then the classrooms right on to it. There was no principal's office. There was the telephone room and that was it. So there were no facilities, no gymnasium, and no plumbing in the school. The kids had to go outside.The trailer and the principal's house were as high tech as it got with toilets that worked and running water and taps. The community had a pump where they would get water to haul back to their homes. They'd have their wringer washer outside and they would do their laundry that way.

Physical Education was a real scream because we had a school yard that drained between the trailers and the school. Half the time it was just thick mud, four or five inches deep. Right at the door of the school there was a concrete pad that must have been maybe ten feet wide and fifteen feet long that was the only clean space or washable space. The rest was step into the muck and then go out to the field. The school had baseball bats and gloves and a few soccer balls for phys ed. equipment. There were no safety precautions at all. The kids would all want to go out and play softball and the first thing they would want to do was take off their shoes. I could never understand this but they would never want to run with their runners on, they always took their shoes off and ran in the mud with their socks and then they would come back to school and pull their shoes back on.

Most of the students I had would work. They did their journal every day in school. I would take these journals in and sometimes they would write a little note to me as well and I would just check them off that they had done their journal. It wasn't something that you marked and criticized. They might write down that they had a fight with someone. I might jot down something to give a different perspective, but it was meant to get them to write and express themselves. I can't think of any students who would come in and ever complain about any assignments. I can remember the kids saying they bet I wouldn't make them work so hard if they were white, which was humorous, because the next year when I taught in Peace River the kids said I bet you never made those Indian kids work this hard. I guess I worked them quite hard comparing them with the students I have now - twenty some years later, but I didn't think I was doing anything excessive. I had nothing to judge by because you certainly don't learn in University much about the actual teaching. It's when you are out doing your planning; when you are the teacher. I had been brought up that you don't just waste your time. Maybe that's part of my own personal upbringing that you are not lazy. You are always doing something.

Discipline was never a problem. I can remember I walked down the aisle when the kids were reading and I would have the strap as the book mark. It was this big symbol yet, actually using the strap to hit a kid was nothing. Sometimes the kids would be goofing around and you'd give them a dirty look and they'd put their hand out and you'd just touch it and that was the equivalent of strapping a kid. But you'd never really strike a kid. It just seems so bizarre now to even have this strap there

when they were such good students. I don't know how I started that. Maybe I came in thinking kids were all supposed to be sitting at their desks and you'd have to do that. I think it was more a joke than anything. It certainly wasn't because they had ever given me any reason why I had to beat them into submission. They were always very polite and very good students, but I think it was just that I had grown up with this image of the strap. I don't know, it seemed natural, it didn't seem at all odd. It seems hilarious now looking back and thinking why would I even have that. I don't even recall how I got it. I can just remember walking down the aisles and having the strap as a book mark.

The only instance I can think of anybody getting out of control was one student who was older than the rest and was always getting into trouble. He wasn't in school very much. He broke into our trailer once on a Friday afternoon during school time. I don't even think he took anything; he just broke in and rummaged around a bit. I remember one time he got in a fight with somebody out in the school yard and I dived right in and literally pulled them apart. I was holding each of these two boys by the shoulder and I didn't realize how enraged they were until one of them looked at me and the look in his eyes--I just thought what am I doing here holding onto this kid. He's going to kill me. But then you could just see the rage sort of ebb and he was fine. But even that wasn't something that you really strapped for. Break it up and sort it out.

We really got along nicely. It was always that I was the teacher and there was always that real respect. They never would talk back to me, but they would also want

to be friends and do things together. If there were ever an instance in school when I had to say anything to anyone, they never held a grudge, even if I got really upset with somebody. I can't remember ever getting upset but I know that there were times because I can remember thinking how neat it was that ten minutes later at recess they'd be pulling me out and asking me to be on their team. It was always like okay I screwed up here, I deserve this, fine that's over, now let's go play.

The kids were wonderful attenders. The chief's son, Paul, was in grade six when I was there and he was there all the time. I remember one day there was a snow storm and it was cold; 65 below. There were two school buses. They were horsedrawn covered wagons with wood heaters in the back. That day it was so cold that the school buses weren't running. They weren't taking the horses out. Paul walked a mile and a half in 65 below weather because he didn't want to miss school. We were at the school just to tell the kids that there was nothing really happening. We didn't really expect anyone. We thought that maybe some of the kids that lived closer might show up and you wanted to be there so they wouldn't freeze to death. We could at least let them warm up and see what we could do about getting them home again. Paul was one of the farthest kids away and when he found out that the buses weren't there, he figured he'd have to get there on his own and he did. So he came in and stayed for a little while and got all warmed up and then he went home again.

Christmas concerts were a big event. Every little school had to have a concert and when you taught the three senior grades in the school you were expected to do a

lot. There were only 65 kids and we didn't have a gymnasium, so we used my classroom because it was the biggest. Planning kept us busy for at least a month, at lunch and during art period, doing the set.We had choir, a Santa Claus play, and a recital. We had a fireplace and the Santa Claus would come through the opening. Something like the night before Christmas. It's so funny thinking about it now--this traditional play with stockings hung by the fireplace played by all these little waifs out in the bush--dressed like Santa Claus' elves. The older kids did the sets and the little kids the acting. The little kids were always so adorable when they're acting and they really were dying to. Of course the important role of Santa Claus was played by one of the grade eight boys. They pulled rank I think.

**Administrators and Consultants**

Northlands was great to work for in some respects; but in others they would drive you crazy. We had an in-service in Grouard before we started teaching. The consultants were really good. You could call them if you were in trouble without feeling embarrassed. They would come out and would stay with you and, in addition to resources and ideas, they would be expected to bring something neat like fresh meat or fruit or vegetables or milk.

The administration was not quite so on the ball. I remember that once the superintendent came out. He didn't comment on the way the school was being taught, or about the subject, or about discipline, or about organization. The only thing he suggested was that maybe we could plant tulips around the trailer. This was so bizarre since, as I said, the trailer was in this spot and the whole school yard drained by it--

it was nothing but muck! We were blown away by his suggestion.

I remember the day that the inspector came. Our contracts were all riding on this inspector coming and we had been warned for some reason. I guess the principal let us know. The day the inspector visited my class my brightest grade six student was absent. She was an excellent student who did meticulous work. At first I thought, "Oh great, the best student and she's away today of all days!" But it turned out so fortunate for me because, instead of sitting in the back somewhere, he sat in Karen's desk. He pulled out her binder which was, of course, perfect. As he turned each page he just smiled because it was so nice. It was wonderful. The kids, who were good anyway, were all on their best behaviour, hands up in the air and volunteering, falling over themselves to answer questions. It ended up being perfect. I couldn't have asked for anything better. I was offered my permanent contract and my permanent teaching certificate after that.

There was a policy that teachers in three-room schools could visit another three-room school. They would have consultants come in and take over your class for a while. I decided to visit Garden River, a school inside Wood Buffalo National Park. They sent a plane for me and dropped the consultant off. On the way there we made a couple of stops to drop mail and passengers off. By the time we were flying to Jean D'or I was the only passenger. So there was the pilot and I was behind him. There were horses on the grass pasture that passed as a runway. He forgot that he had a passenger and started doing dives at these horses to herd them off the runway. All of a sudden you could just tell he thought, "Oh God I've got a passenger!" because his

head whipped around to look at me and there I was just grinning from ear to ear having a great time. But I think there was one of the consultants in particular that would get sick all the time so he was a little concerned about the passenger back there. The teacher at Garden River was really interesting. He really adapted right into the whole native culture. I stayed one complete school day and a couple of nights and watched how he taught and talked to him.

**The Trip to Edmonton**

In the Spring time I took almost half of my kids to Edmonton for a week. The kids had been as far as Peace River, 65 miles away, but that was it. They had never been anywhere else, except the odd one might have visited a cousin somewhere in another little community. But most of them didn't have vehicles, so they were really there in Little Buffalo all the time except when they went out trapping or hunting. I thought it would be a real experience for them to go to Edmonton. The kids decided bingo would be a good way to raise funds for the trip. Of course we started with nothing so our bingo prizes were tupperware and kitchen utensils from the Peace River hardware store. The kids would make popcorn and we would buy cans of pop out of our own pocket. So we had bingos and we made a fair chunk of change raffling off tupperware and kitchen utensils. We always had to keep in mind that the people didn't have a lot of money so we couldn't charge $5 to get in. We charged 25 cents a card to play. Everything was low budget. The Kinsmen Club in Edmonton donated an amount of money for us to go and gave us a meal when we were down there.

We had a problem going to Edmonton with school buses because you could only transport kids for a maximum of four hours a day and the trip would take at least six hours and more like seven or seven and a half. We looked on the map and picked Slave Lake as the half-way point. So we thought okay we'll rent a few rooms. We had fifteen or sixteen kids going, myself, and a young couple from Little Buffalo. I went to Slave Lake one weekend and went from hotel to hotel. They were going to soak us for the rooms and the hotels were dives. Finally, as a last resort, I went to the Sawridge Hotel. I never had thought about it but the Sawridge was owned by the Sawridge Band. When they found out who I was and what I needed the rooms for they practically gave them to us. They charged an insignificant figure and gave us a deal not only for the rooms but on supper in the night and breakfast in the morning.

We crammed everybody into two rooms because this was a real low budget adventure. These kids had never been in places that were as nice. Government subsidized homes are really like unfinished basements. If you can imagine linoleum that doesn't quite reach the walls, no baseboards, electric switches with no plates on them, wood stoves, no plumbing. So to be in this place where there was a bathroom with a gleaming tub and, best of all, a colour television, was wonderful. I remember the squeals of delight when these kids found out. The boys were in a room across the hall. They were so excited they had a colour television they were just bubbling over. They pulled me by the hand across the hall to see this colour television. So I went in there and it was just so cute. I tried to keep a straight face as much as I could. It was a colour television alright--everything was green--the whole picture was green. But

they were so ecstatic they didn't know that was anything wrong.

We got to Edmonton and stayed at the Boys and Girls Club--the cheapest place for us to stay--just off 95th Street and 110th Avenue. It was like a hostel. It was fun because the kids met local kids and they could play baseball. Not that they had much time because we did everything. We went out to Al Oeming's Game Farm and they saw all these animals that they had just read about or heard about. We went on the LRT which had just opened. We went to Coronation pool and one day we went to the Provincial Museum. The little boys were funny. They all wore peaked caps. After we toured the Museum we were all waiting for the bus. All of these little boys and most of the girls smoked. They always smoked at home but here they weren't allowed to at school. You could just tell they were dying for a cigarette. A few of them started to plead--couldn't we just, you know, just one. Finally I said, "Alright you guys, until the bus comes go ahead." I can still remember all these kids sitting on this bench under this immense cloud of smoke, with their caps pulled tight, smoking their brains out until the school bus came; little twelve and thirteen year-old kids just smoking their brains out.

We took them to Fort Edmonton Park and they were just wonderful. They knew everything about trapping. There was a young University fellow working there as a summer job and he couldn't get enough information out of these kids. They would identify the different furs as beaver pelts or muskrat and this guy was writing notes feverishly because these kids were doing all his homework for him.

**The End of the First Year**

I remember at the end of the school year feeling really upset about leaving. It was like they were my kids and I didn't think I could really trust them with somebody else. It was like leaving my family behind and whoever replaced me better be a good teacher and better be looking out for them, even the little kids that I didn't know in grade one and kindergarten. If it was my day to be on supervision at lunch time you would walk outside and you would hardly be outside two seconds and right away you had an appendage on the end of each hand. The kids would hold your hand and you'd have a little kindergarten kid on one side and another on the other side. Pretty soon you'd have somebody holding on to their hand and you'd be walking in formation like Canada geese. Of course you were always a teacher so you were always compelled to teach something. So we would be going through the alphabet and I'd go A and it would be like A A A all the way down and then B B B and we'd walk around the school and go through the alphabet and we'd count and we'd sing songs and it was just a big thing. They'd all run up as soon as they saw you. They had to be the first one to hang on to your hand. It was a really nice warm feeling.

**Moving to Peace River**

I moved to Peace River the next year to teach for the Peace River Separate Board. When students got to grade 9 they had to go into town and board out with somebody to continue school. I was in contact with some of the girls from Little Buffalo. They had been plucked out of their homes and put in a community that was totally foreign to them. Even though home was only 65 miles away it might as well

have been on the moon. They were put with a family they don't know and asked to be babysitters. They would come home after school, babysit until supper time and then babysit after supper until the kids went to bed. They were miserable. I had students who were wonderful, very bright and outgoing. They would come into town and their marks would fall. They would just give up.They would open their mouth and, no matter what they did, it was wrong because they had a really heavy Indian accent. They would wear Indian moccasins and they were criticized and put down. Two girls in particular would call me because they were just miserable. One of the girls was always into everything, a real motor mouth with a 95% average; just a top notch student. When she came into town her marks fell to 30%. Just before Christmas I knew that they were going to quit. This one girl I had been pretty close to told me she could no longer tolerate where she was staying. So I ended up asking her if she wanted to live with us. We got a package deal. We got her and this other girl who was very bright, but also quite a handful. We fixed up a room for them and they stayed with us.

The year I was in Peace River was when the new social studies was first being piloted in Edmonton. My brother-in-law was with Edmonton Public and he was involved with the social studies so he was able to pirate me some of these new materials. I used the new stuff even though it hadn't been officially given the "blessing." I thought if I've got to teach anything I might as well teach the latest stuff. For the grade seven culture unit I took a bunch of kids to Little Buffalo to see how these ladies tanned hides. We spent the morning looking at Mrs. L. and her

sister tanning hides, with moose bone instruments, scraping the fat and the fur off the hide and smoking and washing and everything else. In the afternoon we broke up as mixed teams so there were town kids and native kids all together and the next day back at Peace River School the grade sevens were totally blown away. I still remember one kid. He couldn't get over the fact that the native kids were just like him. It was just like a window had been opened. That was a good.

**The Dilemmas in Dorothy's Stories**

Dorothy's stories are full of her love for her students and for teaching. They also reveal the dilemmas, (Schon, 1990, Lyons, 1990), faced by a young, single, woman teacher, new to the profession, trying to fit into a strange new community. Her prior personal knowledge and her professional training come face-to-face with the realities of a community whose valuing of important knowledge and learning seem to be very different from the text of the curriculum taught in her teacher education program. Dorothy's stories of the community, the students, and her role as a teacher often reveal a struggle.

**Dorothy and the Community**

When Dorothy arrived in Little Buffalo she brought along beliefs and values developed through prior experiences. Her actions and the stories she chooses to tell of these experiences are rooted in the personal knowledge she acquired as she became an adult. Some of the themes that emerge are clear indicators of earlier socialization and reflect Dorothy's ability to adapt to her new community and her assumption that it was her responsibility to fit into the community not necessarily to change it.

Dorothy's attitude toward natives is an example of earlier socialization that creates problem for her when she begins teaching. She grew up in a small town and admits to being "a little twitchy" around natives. She "went to school with native kids but they were all very separate." Her fear that "wild and crazy natives . . . were going to shoot us up or burn the trailer down" is a fear born in childhood. She acknowledges that her experience with a native community has changed her and indicates that now she would be more comfortable encountering a drunken native male than a drunken white male. The example echoes the drunken Indian stereotype prevalent in many communities with native populations and suggests the biases that may have existed within the community in which she grew up.

Dorothy's stories recognize that what constitutes important knowledge for the community is not always found in the curriculum or with the teacher. Mrs. L., reflecting on the dead baby taken from her, wants her children to be educated so that they will have enough knowledge to protect themselves against the autocratic decisions of white experts. Dorothy also acknowledges that the community probably sees her as ignorant in many aspects of day-to-day living in her story about the little boys bringing her a prairie chicken or the gift of choice cuts of game. She enters the community accepting that she is not an expert in all things and appreciating the many small courtesies extended to her by the community. She accepts her status as a visitor and does not attempt "to go native," although she finds an example of this in her trip to Garden River.

It is interesting to note that there are actually two communities that Dorothy

must deal with--the isolated native community of Little Buffalo and the small urban community of Peace River. Her relationship with the Little Buffalo community is a good one, but her status as a teacher, along with the cultural differences between her and the community, result in a sense of isolation. Peace River would appear to be similar to the community in which she grew up. The limited choices for entertainment, two bars and a movie theatre are not the best amusements for retaining ones status as a teacher and Dorothy's homewrecker story reveals that she quite clearly feels constrained and at times confused by Peace River community values.

Dorothy also has a somewhat unusual collegial community. Her rowdy roommate is constantly embarrassing her by failing to live up to the standard that Dorothy perceives as appropriate for teachers on a social outing. In spite of her feelings and the potential for further embarrassment, Dorothy provides her roommate with rides into town and makes sure that she gets home safely. Dorothy's sense of fun as well as her standard of human caring place her in a constant dialectic between what is okay for her to do as an individual and how she is expected to behave as a teacher. While this circumstance occurs in the social setting of the Peace River community, it does not appear to occur in the Little Buffalo social setting or in the classroom.

Dorothy's sensitivity to the cultural differences of the community is given voice when she describes the traditional Santa Claus play complete with fireplace and stockings as somewhat "bizarre." Her compromise in allowing students to smoke on their school trip is another recognition that these students live with different values and sometimes students' needs must supersede school rules.

**Dorothy as a Teacher**

Dorothy's professional education represents an intentional socialization process. Standards for professional practice are transmitted through an educational program; but, often the actual experience of teaching places the individual in a dialectical relationship between professional knowledge and personal values and beliefs. There are several examples in Dorothy's stories where her personal knowledge is at odds with professional expectations. Throughout all of them there is a strong sense of who Dorothy is as a teacher.

Dorothy makes the comment that she was always teaching in the classroom or on the playground and attributes this to her upbringing. She was raised not to be lazy--always to be doing something. Her willingness to work in a community very different from her experiences stems from her desire to have a job and the fact that she was less qualified than others and expected, if she wanted to work, to take any position for a few years until she had her permanent teaching certificate. In taking on this teaching assignment she feels she will be increasing her choices and taking control of her career. Dorothy acknowledges throughout her stories a sense of adventure and underlines the differences between her and other beginning teachers who would prefer to be idle until they can land city jobs.

When Dorothy arrives in Little Buffalo she is surprised that she will be teaching grades one and two when she had indicated she was trained to teach high school social studies. The three teachers, one of whom was principal, sit down and re-arrange their teaching assignments to suit their own preferences, a sensible solution.

Dorothy recognizes the curriculum as an important component of teacher responsibility. She is extremely uncomfortable with the performance of the other teacher who is her roommate. Perhaps her walks around the school yard with the younger children are an attempt to fill in some of the gaps created by this teacher. The number of minutes required for each subject is used as the basis for planning the daily schedule. She also comments on the lack of resources and the long hours spent in going through and interpreting University material to make it suitable for young children. She states that she found science and social studies difficult to teach "because I just couldn't come up with the curriculum . . . there were no references really for social studies and science."

Dorothy makes her preferences regarding the nature of curriculum resources clear in a discussion about the curriculum materials developed in Edmonton related to the 1978 curriculum change. She like the materials because:

> they had a structure that was easy to adopt. They started off with and objective and everything was clearly set out along with a list of the resources you needed so you had something concrete to work with.

Dorothy continued to use and adapt the materials she received for years after. Dorothy also commented here on the lesson plans and materials developed related to teacher education courses.

> An instructor would ask you to develop a language arts unit on grade four and you might never use the material in your entire life, so it's kind of a useless endeavour, particularly if your professor has a slant towards particular thing.

Dorothy makes one other comment about her teacher education courses related to the possibility of working her students too hard. These comments suggest her experiences in the teacher education program were less relevant to her than her subject specific courses such as anthropology. Dorothy's preference for curriculum materials with stated objectives and concrete outcomes, however, would suggest that the instructional strategies inherent in the teacher education program provided her with standards which she used to judge new curriculum resources.

The story of the strap underlines how professional practice, whether it comes from the actual educational program or perhaps from earlier models of teaching that Dorothy experiences, is not always rooted in personal knowledge. Dorothy admits that the strap was not necessary; her students were exceptionally well-behaved. She uses it symbolically, touching the hand of a naughty student, but would never resort to it as a means to maintain discipline.

Dorothy's use of journals or diaries particularly interested me. I asked her whether this was something she had learned as an instructional strategy, but it wasn't. She felt the device made sense in creating a point of individual contact between her and each of her students. I asked her whether she had students write in journals now. Her response was that the way schools were organized now made it very difficult, neither students nor teachers would have the time to do a good job of it. It seemed to me that this response captured Dorothy's practical knowledge as a teacher. Strategies were to be used when appropriate, not because they might fall in or out of popularity.

The organization of the trip to Edmonton underlines Dorothy's belief that the curriculum must be adapted to fit the needs of the student and the values of the community. She explains that the students are virtually isolated in their community and a trip to Edmonton is planned to expand their horizons. I think this would fit in well with Mrs. L.'s values for education. While Dorothy recognizes the isolation and naivete of her students and shares amusing stories about the coloured television and their baseball caps, she is also delighted to have them experience the power of their own knowledge when they visit Fort Edmonton and are able to teach a young university student about pelts. She builds on this cross-cultural experience the next year when she brings students from a larger urban centre to visit the Little Buffalo community. Once again the native community is made to feel expert in its own context. She measures the success of this venture in the urban's students' realization that native kids were just like them.

The story of the young women who go to school in Peace River is perhaps the most poignant expression of Dorothy's commitment to teaching and her assumption that her responsibilities went beyond the classroom walls. Rather than see these young women fail because of the discrimination and exploitation of the community, Dorothy tries to provide them with a safe place where she can provide them with the support necessary to ensure that if they fail it won't be because someone didn't care enough to help them. During Dorothy's life as a teacher she has opened her home several times to students experiencing similar problems. One such student is living with her now.

**Conclusion**

My retelling of Dorothy's stories focuses on the relationship of a new teacher with the community, her students and the curriculum. It is evident from the stories that Dorothy has adapted the curriculum to the context of the community and her students' needs. The curriculum set by the Department of Education is little more than a beginning; a way of checkpointing that whatever she is doing in the classroom, or outside of it for that matter, will ensure that her students are as successful as possible in an educational system designed for another theoretical community. Beyond the text of the curriculum, Dorothy is the curriculum maker (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). Her curriculum celebrates the important knowledge a real community and uses this knowledge to create an environment for learning that situates the knowledge and experiences of her learners as the starting place for learning. It is a living curriculum that adapts with the students and the community within which she teaches. The possibility for creating a meaningful learning environment seems far more likely within Dorothy's living, adapting curriculum than in the text of a curriculum written by educational administrators that purports to provide a common, meaningful experience for all of the learning communities in this province. Of course, to enact a living adapting curriculum we would have to place our trust in teachers. The stories of other teachers, administrators, and curriculum developers would suggest that such trust is highly unlikely.

References

Carr, David (1986). Time, narrative and history. Indiana:University Press.

Clandinin, D.Jean & Connelly, F. Michael (1992). Teacher as curriculum maker. In Philip W. Jackson, (ed.), Handbook of research on curriculum. New York: Macmillan Publishing.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. (1990). Research on teaching and teacher research: The issues that divide. Educational Researcher, 19(2), 2-11.

Connelly, F. Michael & Clandinin, D. Jean (1990). Narrative and story in practice and research. Educational Researcher June-July.

Dewey, John (1938). Experience and education; The kappa delta pi lecture series. New York: Collier Books.

Foucault, Michael (1970). The order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences. New York: Vintage Books.

Jalongo, Mary Renck ((1992). Teachers' stories: Our ways of knowing. Educational Leadership. April, 1992, 68-73.

Lyons, N. (1990). Dilemmas of knowing: Ethical and epistemological dimensions of teachers' work and development. Harvard Eductional Review. 60(2), 159-180.

Perrone, Vito (1991). A letter to teachers: Reflections on school and the art of teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ricoeur, Paul (1984). Time and narrative. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Schon, Donald A. (1986). Toward a new epistomology of practice. In Barry Checkoway (ed.) Strategic perspectives on planning practice. Toronto: Lexington Books.

Schon, Donald A. (1990). The reflective turn: Case studies in reflective practice. New York: Teachers College Press.

Shor, Ira (1980). Critical teaching and everyday life. Boston: South End Press.

van Manen, Max (1991). The tact of teaching: The meaning of pedagogical thoughtfulness. New York: State University.

> Imagine the teacher not so much as a maker of curriculum but as a part of it and [to] imagine a place for context, culture (Dewey's notion of interaction), and temporality (both past and future contained in Dewey's notion of "continuity"). In this view, ends and means are so intertwined that designing curricula for teachers to implement for instructional purposes appears unreal, somewhat as if the cart were before the horse. (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992, p. 365)
>
> From the point of view of teachers not involved in a project, it matters little whether it is run by other teachers, government officials, or academics; the project itself is external to their classroom situations. (p. 371)

**Perspectives on Curriculum**

At a recent party to celebrate the successful Ph.D. defense of a friend, we were all ranged around several tables in the graduate student lounge drinking beer and poking at cheese-cemented taco chips. We were exchanging stories about our "works in progress" and I mentioned mine was on curriculum. One of the women across the table from me declared that the major problem with our university teacher education program was that there was too much curriculum and not enough instruction in the curriculum and instruction courses. The woman was a Ph.D. candidate in the Faculty, on leave from an associate superintendency with a medium-sized school district in the province. Unfortunately, I had to leave and was not able to pursue this declaration, although I have thought about it and what she could have meant.

How much curriculum is enough? How much is too much? What would replace

the time spent in teaching curriculum? More methods and practical materials development? Would a teacher agree with this assessment? Do we all mean the same thing when we use the word "curriculum"?

In an effort to unravel these questions and reflect on my personal knowledge of curriculum, I began to consider the two terms, curriculum and instruction. Was one not the ends and the other the means? And, if the teacher (instruction) is the means then is not knowledge of curriculum necessary to achieve the ends? If this is so, does it not make sense to teach both curriculum and instruction to teacher candidates?

But then I thought about how I used a curriculum when I taught social studies. The "curriculum" was a document I referred to when I was in planning mode, usually prior to beginning a new unit or course that I had not taught before. Based on whatever was said about goals, outcomes and resources, I would craft my unit plan and lessons to fit within the curricular context--as I interpreted it. If methodologies or model plans were included, I would pick and choose what I felt would work for me. The approved text and resources available became part of my plan, to be ordered and brought into the classroom at the appropriate time but, often, I would find materials more suited to the interests of students or the events of the day and bring them in as richer alternatives.

When I was with the students, the concept of curriculum receded to the background, superseded by the imperatives of the classroom milieu. The text of the curriculum became only one of many factors to be dealt with in the environment. Unit and lesson plans were just that, and often were adapted or abandoned on the spot in

response to student needs or emergent social issues. I would not refer back to the document once I had developed the plans and lessons and I suspect, in time, my interpretations would become the curriculum for me without a lot of testing for curricular match. What teacher, after all, is likely to discard an effective, classroom-tested unit or lesson plan because it doesn't precisely match the curriculum? What teacher would abandon the opportunity, if not right, to bring her own emphasis and enthusiasms to the classroom. And what teacher would deny her students the room to explore from their own perspectives and interests, even if they did not exactly match the curriculum? Well, perhaps I would, but what would be the circumstances? My own experiences in the classroom do battle with my knowledge of the power and politics that surround a curriculum.

There is a certain authority to the curriculum document; it is both a threat and a support. Something bad may happen if I don't attend to it. My students may fail exams, or my principal or superintendent may assess me as incompetent on the rare occasions when I am visited in the classroom. It is a useful scapegoat when bored students challenge why they have to learn something. It's part of the curriculum. It works with "difficult" parents, too. The curriculum can be referred to as a "higher authority" if they disagree with some aspects of their children's schooling. If I know the curriculum, I must know what is best for their children.

My vision of curriculum is just that, my vision. Even as I reflect on the meaning of curriculum to me as a classroom teacher, other voices from my experience remind me that curriculum means something very different to me as an educational

administrator. Curriculum is planned through "expert" committees; it is directed at specific goals. It is a political process that debates the value of certain knowledge and selects from possible alternatives. Only after rationales have been developed and permission given can courses be taught. Jackson (1992), citing the work of Hamilton (1989) on the definition of curriculum, suggests that a curriculum is a form of organization which acts as an instrument of social efficiency both internally and externally motivated by a combination of administrative and pedagogical authorities. "At the heart of the word's educational usage, therefore, lies the idea of an organizational structure imposed by authorities for the purpose of bringing order to the conduct of schooling" (p. 5).

Certainly, this definition accounts for my administrators vision of curriculum, but does it account for my teacher vision of curriculum? Marker and Mehlinger (1992) summarize research on the purpose, definition, trends, controls and outcomes of social studies curricula. They identify two very different perspectives on curriculum:

> It is difficult to explain why so much attention is devoted to the nature and purpose of social studies in the curriculum. There is little evidence that classroom teachers use such statements; for them a curricular rationale seems to be something you employ after you have decided what you want to teach - if you articulate one at all. But for college professors the justification for social studies is of highest priority. They believe that one cannot possibly know what to teach before deciding why to teach it. (p. 832)

Marker and Mehlinger suggest that philosophical debates over rationale for social studies curricula tend to generate more debates, delaying decisions about content and, "as Leming (1989) suggests, perhaps . . . reinforce the development of two cultures so foreign to one another that they seldom communicate" (p. 832).

The metaphor of separate cultures that do not communicate is an interesting one. My career has enabled me to be both an administrator and a teacher. If I step from my administrative office to the classroom, do I step into a different culture. Absolutely! They differ in language, values and beliefs, rituals and structures of power and authority. Do those two cultures communicate? I think they must. The communication link between teacher and teacher educator may be flawed but it does exist. The extent to which it is valued by either is questionable. The socialization process that a teacher undergoes in a teacher education program establishes the communication link. The further removed the teacher education program is from the actual experiences of the classroom, the weaker the communication link because it is difficult for two cultures to communicate without shared experiences and values. It is even more difficult if there is an assumption on the part of one culture that its status is superordinate to the other.

There is a tendency for teacher educators to truncate relationships with teachers once they have completed their preparation program. In addition there seems to be little inclination for teachers to sustain a continuing relationship with teacher educators after they have graduated. This circumstance leaves teacher education institutions with little or no feedback about how the various beliefs and values inherent in the teacher

education program relate to the actual teaching of a curriculum in the schools. The potential for multiple interpretations of what a social studies curriculum is or should be increases as opportunities for sharing values and beliefs decrease. Of course, teachers and teacher education institutions are not the only communicants. Marker and Merlingher recognize the multiple perspectives:

> "What is the social studies curriculum" depends upon one's perspective. A state social studies consultant might point to the approved state curriculum guide with its carefully drafted "scope and sequence" and individual grade-level or course-specific handbooks. A school superintendent or local school board member might refer to a locally approved sequence of courses. A school principal may present the textbooks that have been adopted for each social studies course. A teacher may offer his (her) course syllabus, unit outlines, and daily lesson plans as evidence for what actually occurs in class. And the students enrolled in the course, having little or no knowledge of what others use as evidence, may mention things they or the teachers did in class that were memorable. What the social studies curriculum is depends upon perspective. (p.833)

What are the implications of these multiple perspectives for implementation of curriculum and for the control of schooling? The work of Korteweg (1972) and Mawson (1982) provide valuable insights into the perspectives of curriculum developers during a twenty year period of social studies curriculum change in Alberta. Korteweg's enterprise was to look at the curriculum making processes that led to the development of the 1971 social studies curriculum and evaluate the outcome. Mawson

looks at the factors, individuals and groups involved in the process of curriculum development for the 1978 interim social studies curriculum. Both of these scholars have included segments from interviews and minuted meetings that reveal the multiple perspectives and perhaps the separate cultures of the different constituencies involved in curriculum building.

In the next section of this paper I have woven together the stories of classroom teachers who were in their first or second year of teaching when the 1978 curriculum was implemented, anecdotes from curriculum developers and interview material extracted from Korteweg and Mawson as well as additional references to curriculum related documents to build a composite story of this period of curriculum change from multiple perspectives. The composite story will be followed by a discussion of the individual and social pressures that shaped peoples' behaviours in this era of curriculum building and the dialectic between personal and professional choices. The concluding section will discuss the problematics of curriculum implementation revealed from this story building process.

**The 1971 Curriculum**

The year 1967 marked Canada's centennial. It was a time of vibrant national pride and economic growth. As Canadians moved into this era of increased prosperity and rapid technological development, pressures were put on school programs to adapt to social and political imperatives of a changing society. Social studies curricula in particular were looked at as a conduit between socio-political values and Canadian youth. C.D. Ledgerwood, a key player in curriculum development during the period,

acknowledged the relationship between the Alberta social studies curriculum and broader social values:

> Curriculum reflects the ethos of the society in which it's being developed. Ethos stems from economic conditions of that society. If you look at the 1971 curriculum, there was an economic buoyancy that gave rise to a permissiveness and willingness to provide a freedom to learn. (Mawson, 1982, p. 82)

Skau (1988) further enumerates social conditions that provided the impetus for adaptation of the Alberta studies curriculum, including increased urbanization and industrialization, the liberalizing effects of the First and Second World Wars and the affluence of the fifties and sixties. These factors, coupled with the breakdown of traditional institutions such as the family and Church, created a generation of youth that had greater mobility, more money to spend and fewer structures of authority to guide their daily decision-making.

Adaptation of the social studies curriculum was directed at these social changes, but the emphasis and interest of a variety of stakeholders often pushed adaptation in divergent or opposing directions. Parents' and politicians' assessments of what was important knowledge often differed from the perspectives of educators and curriculum experts; creating pendulum like shifts between progressive educational methods and more traditional content specific methods. Educators such as T. Aoki, a professor of education at The University of Alberta, were concerned that these multiple pressures had resulted in a patchwork social studies curriculum and called for the Department of Education to "get some solid work done in the field of Social Studies" (Korteweg,

1972, p. 95).

Aoki's call for solid work coincided with concerns expressed by members of the Department of Education. M.L.Watts, Director of Curriculum felt the whole process of planning and approving changes to the social studies curriculum required an overarching rationale. Eventually a plan evolved. The Department of Education would hold a two-week conference on the Alberta Social Studies Curriculum for Grades I - XII. The conference was carefully planned to ensure that participants shared an interest in looking at the social studies program from a broad perspective rather than for specific grade levels; that they would be able to provide leadership in implementing the recommendations derived from the conference and that there was adequate representation from all grade levels (Watts, 1967). A highly personal approach was used by the conference planning committee which included T. Aoki and S.N. Odynak, then Chair of the Senior High School Social Studies Committee when contacting the twenty participants representing the Department of Education, the Universities of Alberta and Calgary, educational administrators and department heads or Social Studies coordinators.

> The conference audience was the result of an 'expanding effect,' a 'domino theory' if you wish. Each individual participant was handpicked by the planning committee. At least one member on the committee was acquainted with the invitee and convinced that whoever was invited would have an effect on someone else. (Korteweg, p. 96)

Four individuals were contacted to be the outside resource person. Three of the

individuals identified were proponents of concept-development and inquiry-based learning related to the work of Bruner; they were Hilda Taba, Edwin Fenton, and Irving Morrisett. The last name on the list, Byron Massialas, was a values-based educator. The first three were unable to come because of prior commitments. Massialas agreed to come. Aoki indicated that this happenstance had a profound impact on the nature of the conference outcomes (Personal interview, 1991) .

E.A. Torgunrud, a former Director of Curriculum recognized the conference as a beginning of a new era in curriculum development: "The provincial conference in 1967 was the conference from which the current approach used in social studies had its origins" (Mawson, 1982, p. 77). The results of the conference were a series of recommendations to the Department of Education supporting a values-based, problems-oriented curriculum which emphasized inquiry into social issues. No content was to be considered mandatory and no textbooks were to be prescribed. It was also recommended that the efforts of curriculum committees should be coordinated to avoid the fragmentation that had occurred earlier (Odynak, 1967).

In 1971 the new social studies curriculum was officially introduced.

> . . . premised on the assumption that schools must help students in their quest for a clear, consistent and defensible system of values . . . Social studies invites free and open inquiry . . . such inquiry will service the humanistic goals of education by offering students experience in living and not just preparation for living . . . Students will deal with the "what ought to be" and will make this world a more desirable place in which to live. (Alberta Education, Responding

to Change, 1971, p. 5)

The substantive changes in the 1971 social studies curriculum moved away from teaching within the traditional disciplines of history and geography and sought to expose students to the major conceptual frames and modes inherent in social science paradigms. Rote memorization was to be replaced with inquiry-based experiences directed at the processes of valuing. Textbooks were repudiated as classroom resources to give more opportunity for teacher prepared contemporary learning materials. Both students and parents were encouraged to give input on the selection of materials. The experiences of the 1967 Conference were to have a profound effect on those involved in curriculum planning and implementation.

**Organizational Change**

Changes in organizational structure within the Department of Education were endemic to the period between the 1967 conference and the introduction of the 1978 interim curriculum. Three factors seem to be key in these changes: (1) the pressures brought to bear by evaluative structures to provide for program articulation and work against fragmentation, (2) the struggle for power and status as the field of curriculum became increasingly professionalised and bureaucratized, and (3) the increasing politicization of the social studies curriculum. In 1968 J.S. Hrabi, then Director of Curriculum, reported the reorganization of the system of curriculum committees "to increase efficiency in dealing with emergent and shifting needs for curriculum change and to obtain better articulation of programs" (Alberta Education, 1969, p. 39-40). The structure was changed from three curriculum committees at the elementary,

junior and senior high school level to two curriculum boards, one at the elementary level and one at the junior and senior high school level. The earlier committees were disbanded. Membership of the curriculum boards included Department of Education personnel and representatives from the four large urban school districts, the Alberta School Trustees' Association, the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations, the Alberta Teacher's Association and the faculties of education of the universities in Alberta. The Secondary Curriculum Board included additional representatives from Faculties of Arts and Science of the universities and from other post-secondary institutions. These Boards formed sub-committees to deal with specific subject areas. The work of the boards during 1968 included the development of conceptual frameworks for the social studies program, preparation of documents on social studies which would provide a model for the development of unit studies and the establishment of criteria for judging locally prepared units of study.

In 1970, T.C. Byrne, Deputy Minister of Education reported that virtually all of the legislation governing the public school system had been revised and that the legislature had given assent to a new School Act, a new Department of Education Act, and a new School Election Act.

> The new legislation has done much to shift educational decision-making from the provincial to the local level. Boards have been freed of legislative direction on administrative organization with the exception of the requirement that jurisdictions of a certain size must appoint a superintendent. While the school year is defined in terms of a minimum and maximum number of days, boards

> may set opening and closing dates as they see fit. They have acquired, through regulations considerable freedom of curriculum innovation and textbook selection. More than ever before they have been licensed to establish their own spending priorities. (Alberta Education, 1970, pp. 7- 8)

The 1971 Annual Report acknowledged that the Act had "resulted in a noticeable increase of interaction between school boards and teachers who staffed their schools" (Alberta Education, 1971, p. 10).

Increased public participation as well as grade to grade articulation was the rationale provided by Julian Koziak, Minister of Education, for once again changing the organizational structure of the Curriculum Department in 1975. The existing Elementary and Secondary Curriculum Boards were replaced with a single Curriculum Policies Board. Membership included three practicing teachers and six citizens as well as the traditional stakeholders who participated in previous iterations of these committees. All curriculum changes were to be sent to this Board before ministerial approval. Two levels of committees were established to feed into this system; Subject Area Coordinating Committees and Ad Hoc Committees. (Mawson. p.98)

**Curriculum Development**

Development and implementation of the 1971 social studies curriculum was orchestrated by Doug Ledgerwood who was seconded to the Curriculum Branch from Field Services in 1970. Part of his work involved facilitating the development of model units that were to be used as examples to show teachers how to develop their own classroom resources within the framework of the 1971 Master Plan.The Social

Studies Handbook for grade 7 developed by Hugh Ross, Social Studies Coordinator for Strathearn Junior High School, provides an example of the modules. His rhetoric with respect to the new curriculum is a cogent example of the commitment and enthusiasm generated by proponents of the new curriculum.

> For the first time, teachers are free--free to create their own learning environment. For some, this is a frustrating experience--being on your own, developing your own course within simple, broad parameters--but in time we are convinced that students will benefit and so will teachers. Teachers will be forced to become more creative. Nothing in this handbook is prescriptive. Many teachers may prefer to ignore it. Others, however, may find some or all of it useful. The sample units may not be suited to your classroom but they may serve as catalysts--as foci for creating units of your own.
>
> First let us start off by saying that the new social studies is NEW. Some say, "Oh, we've been doing this for years--only we didn't know what to call it". Nonsense. The approach is new, the content is new, the techniques are new, the materials are new. A teacher must face up to the fact that in order to teach social studies now he must change. This requires that he read some or all of the major references listed; and implement these new concepts and techniques in his classroom. Don't feel badly if you make some mistakes--take courage in your successes and build on these. (p.1)

The demands placed on the teacher created some concerns that were expressed to Doug Ledgerwood as he travelled around the province encouraging the development

of new model units. Dr. C. Chamberlin, a member of the university professoriate remembers teachers' reactions:

> I also know that people in Alberta Education like Ledgerwood were getting letters that said, "That's good, but it won't work--I don't have the time or resources." He was doing workshops all over the province and faced teachers on a daily basis trying to get teachers to use the program and it was increasingly clear that teachers were not using the program. (Mawson, p. 96)

The problems of how teachers were implementing the curriculum was studied by Frank Crowther, a graduate student at the University of Alberta at that time.

> His findings were critical of the load that had been laid on teachers and suggested that curriculum existed on paper and not in children's experiences. It would be that way until substantial changes were made. He was hired by Alberta Education (1973, 1974) and one of the things he got involved in was trying to move towards an evaluation beyond the Edmonton area. (p. 96)

**The Downey Report.** In 1974 L.W. Downey was commissioned by the Alberta Department of Education to evaluate the 1971 social studies curriculum. The results of the Downey Report, published in 1975, cited implementation as a problem. Four reasons were given: lack of time for program development, lack of resources, lack of consultative services, and lack of teacher competence in program development. The report also revealed that teachers were not familiar enough with the 1971 curriculum to implement it:

> . . . though over 90% of the respondents to our questionnaire claimed to be

aware of Responding to Change and/or Experiences in Decision Making, it became evident in our interviews that they differ widely in their knowledge of these documents. It was further evident from our document analyses that, though most teacher-program developers were familiar with the major thrusts of the Master Plan, many of the more subtle orientations (for example, the treatment of concepts) tended to escape them.

In general we concluded that a great many teachers do not have the deep familiarity with the Master Plan that would be required for effective implementation. (Downey, p. 6)

In summary, we conclude that, although the Master Plan is highly commendable and highly acceptable in its major orientations, its internal inconsistencies and a lack of teacher awareness of its subtle intents have rendered it far less useful than it ought to have been. Indeed, we conclude that the Master Plan is still, five years after its creation, far more an idea in the minds of its creators than it is a guide to Social Studies education in the classrooms of the Province.( p. 7)

The Downey Report recommended that the Social Studies program be continued but that some changes should be made. Two of the recommendations of the report were to distribute Canadian content more evenly across grades, and to rewrite the curriculum guides in order to make them comprehensible to all teachers. A third recommendation directed a cautionary note to Canadian Content proponents:

. . . we have noted that in some circles (both within and outside the classroom)

> this renewed emphasis upon Canadiana has taken on a highly nationalistic, chauvinistic quality. Also there is a new demand for a kind of encyclopedic knowledge of Canada's history and geography. These turns are completely incompatible with the expressed goals of education and with the fundamental orientations of the Social Studies program. (p. 26)

The report recommended that this push for more Canadian content "not be allowed to become the excuse for subverting some of the other important goals of the program" (p. 27).

Based on the recommendations from the Downey Report, Ledgerwood, who had been appointed Associate Director of Curriculum for Social Studies in 1975, switched from implementing to revising the 1971 curriculum. His job was made more complex by the newly established Curriculum Policies Board (CPB) which would oversee the work of the newly established Social Studies Curriculum Content Committee (SSCCC). The SSCCC membership was deeply committed to the progressive views of the 1971 curriculum. The more politically attuned CPB was pushing for greater structure and content. Indeed, at the first meeting of the Curriculum Policies Board, in September 1976, Mr. Koziak, Minister of Education, addressed the members and pointed out that the public was questioning education much more than in the past decade and expressing the need for a "basic" education.

The process Ledgerwood used to revise the curriculum included multiple drafts and broad consultations. Drafts had been modified after meeting with eight groups of teachers and a seminar was planned to include ten parents, ten non-specialist teachers,

ten specialist teachers, ten social studies supervisors and ten university professors. The revision attempted to balance the encouragement of autonomous curriculum development with the needs that teachers and members of the public had expressed for greater clarity in terms of methodology, content and objectives. F. Horvath, a consultant with the Calgary School Board, pointed out that not all teachers were satisfied with this process:

> The idea of taking the curriculum in its draft stage and getting reactions was a good one. How else are you going to involve the masses in curriculum development? But there was something terribly wrong with it all. One of the things that disappointed me was what eventually happened to our input. I recall Doug Ledgerwood coming to Calgary with a draft to get our reactions. We felt good about providing him with our criticisms and suggestions. He took down our ideas diligently, but the next time we saw the draft, we didn't see any of our ideas in there because what had happened was that he took that draft up to Grande Prairie and got reactions from teachers there and each time he met with a new group of teachers the draft changed . . . I have not met anyone else who was particularly satisfied as a result of this process and it may be because they never really saw the result of their input in the draft. (Mawson, p.190)

At the December 1976 meeting of CPB, Ledgerwood asked the committee to recommend to the Minister of Education that the proposed revised curriculum be approved in principle. CPB deferred a decision on this, opting to focus on the development of policy structures for curriculum decision-making. The policies

endorsed by the Curriculum Policies Board and the values and beliefs of the membership of the Social Studies Curriculum Content Committee were becoming increasingly divergent. SSCCC came under increasing pressure to change its position. W. Dever, a member of the SSCCC, described the dilemma:

> As we started to develop the curriculum, it became obvious that the people on the committee did not reflect what the people in the field wanted. Teachers were having a difficult time with 1971. Do you keep with the ideals that weren't working in the classroom, or do you try and teach the teacher to cope. We made a conscious decision that would be least restrictive to a competent social studies teacher, but the most help to a good generalist. (Mawson, p. 191)

Frank Crowther continued to express concern for the teacher:

> I think that by and large the "back to the basics" movement had created such a threat to teachers at this time, and their jobs were so complicated because of not having resources to work with that they probably had very legitimate demands. That demand for more prescriptiveness was something that was broadly based . . . There were some others around who were coping with the 1971 program, but there was a very large number who were not. (p. 195)

Ledgerwood acknowledged the impact of these multiple pressures on the SSCCC

> If you look at the 1971 curriculum there was an economic buoyancy that gave rise to a permissiveness and a willingness to provide a freedom to learn. By 1975 that was weakening. By 1978, it had changed. In 1975, they could be quite resolute; they could do so because society was supportive. By 1978, the society

was swinging to the right. And members of the committee were aware of this swing . . . so committee members changed. They weren't out of step. It wasn't them that changed but the society and the schools, and teachers, and government officials. They were reactive not reactionary. (Mawson, p. 198)

At the May, 1977 meeting of CPB, Ledgerwood tried once again to get approval, this time for an interim proposal. CPB once again focussed on policy and provided nine policy statements to guide SSCCC in their work:

1. Teachers should not have to spend a great deal of time in the role of curriculum developer; therefore, programs of study and resources should provide adequate structure.
2. Prescription and structure are not to be equated.
3. Value issues, generalizations, and skills at each grade level should be prescribed by the province.
4. Flexibility should exist in the provincial programs to allow school systems, schools, and teachers to adapt the program to the needs of the local area and the needs of individual students.
5. Students need experiences in resolving value dilemmas. Valuing should be grounded in knowledge and skills.
6. Both pedagogical and practical concerns should be considered in formulating a policy on learning resources.
7. Canadian content should not be spread piecemeal throughout the grades, but should be organized in concentrated blocs.

8. There must be an equitable balance among historical, contemporary, and futuristic studies, as well as local, Canadian, and global studies.
9. As long as social action is optional and does not occupy too much time it should be encouraged. (Mawson, p. 206)

In August, 1977, CPB met to discuss further the policies it had delineated for the SSCCC and agreed that the policy statements should serve as "the framework under which subsequent social studies curriculum revisions would occur." (p. 209) The CPB also specified that it would examine the revised program in detail once it was completed, clearly signalling that whatever form the proposal was currently in was not acceptable. By February of 1978 SSCCC brought back a revised interim draft program proposal. The motions presenting the proposal asked the CPB to recommend to the Minister of Education that:

1. the refined version of the interim draft be available to schools as an alternate program for 1978-79 and 1979-80.
2. teacher in-service, further revisions to the Master Plan, and the development of support materials continue for an additional eighteen months.
3. a finalized program receive mandatory implementation in Alberta Social Studies classrooms in September, 1980. (p. 211)

According to Mawson (1982), "The Curriculum Policies Board generally held the view that the Master Plan had an appropriate amount of structure, except in the area of the one-quarter unstructured time" (p. 212). The CPB gave formal approval to

the revised social studies curriculum by a close vote. The Minister of Education deferred approval because of the high degree of public interest in the social studies program, the close vote in CPB and the debate in Legislature on the Goals of Education which "might include an emphasis on history and geography" and therefore require a subsequent revision to the social studies curriculum.

At this point Doug Ledgerwood resigned his position as Associate Director of Curriculum to take another position and Frank Crowther replaced him. He describes himself as having a very different leadership style from Ledgerwood, "I think my own operation in the branch was different. I was much more structured in how I organized committees and their operations. I was much more demanding of them for taking responsibility for getting things done" (p. 218). Crowther's thinking tended to be more in line with the Curriculum Policies Board:

> It was clear to me in many respects just in the way it was written, in terms of jargon, lack of consistency between different areas of objectives, and so forth, [there] was such a lack of detail that it wasn't going to work. It was on the right track, but more definitive statements had to be included in it and the Curriculum Policy Board recommendations had to be followed. (p. 219)

Crowther's relationship with SSCCC members deteriorated.

> They're the most enlightened and intelligent, and responsible people that you could get and are a credit to the profession . . . On the other hand, there was a point at which it seemed to me that their outlook on what need to be on the nature of the curriculum . . . was at odds with what I thought it needed to be.

(Mawson, p. 223)

The final product was very much Crowther's:

> I gave approval and edited every word in the document with help from individuals like Chamberlin, Parsons, and Johnson. In the final analysis, my bias entered into it. I would re-write it. I did everything in the final editing state myself. (p. 222)

The revised curriculum never did go back to the CPB. In June, 1978 the Social Planning Committee of Cabinet discussed the new social studies program. In July 1978 Koziak wrote Premier Lougheed outlining the major features of the revised social studies program, on September 6, the Cabinet Committee on Education approved the social studies program for a two year trial basis and on October 18, 1978, the Minister of Education stated that the revised social studies program would be made available for optional use starting January 1, 1979. (p. 225)

**Canadian content.**

While the Department of Education began the work of implementing the recommendations of the 1967 conference, external pressures were emerging that would serve to provide a national perspective related to the valuing of knowledge within the Alberta social studies curriculum. These pressures set up a tension between the progressive shape of the 1971 curriculum and the perceived need for more specific content typical of a more traditional curricula. In 1968 A.B. Hodgetts wrote the report of the National History Project, a two-year study into the teaching of Canadian history, social studies and civics in elementary and secondary schools. The report

entitled What Culture? What Heritage? described the deplorable state of Canadian studies in schools and recommended the development of a Canadian Studies Consortium. This report triggered a series of conferences and committees that resulted in the establishment of the Canadian Studies Foundation in 1970 with the expressed intent to increase and improve the teaching of Canadian studies on a national scale. Funding for the identification and development of Canadian resources was provided by a variety of federal, provincial, and local agencies including school boards, teachers' associations, and private corporations. Regional centres were to be established to facilitate resources development and curriculum implementation. In 1970 Ralph Sabey was appointed head of Project Canada West, one of the regional centres, to encourage the inclusion of Canadian content materials in the curricula of the western provinces. Project Canada West kept in contact with curriculum personnel in provincial departments of education.

Rising nationalism exerted both economic and educational pressure for change. The Gray Report, produced by the Federal Liberal Government in 1969 examined the extent of foreign ownership in Canada. Three individuals involved in Canadian publishing, Peter C. Newman, Jack McClelland, and Mel Hurtig took up the concerns of the Gray Report and created the Committee for an Independent Canada as a pressure group to keep the issues of foreign ownership before the public. Canadian content in the schools and knowledge of Canada were seen as important components to building both Canadian identity and ensuring the limitation of foreign ownership. The concerns and the participants in the Canadian Studies Foundation and the

Committee for an Independent Canada would have a significant impact on curriculum development and implementation in Alberta during the 1970's.

The Downey report acknowledged that there was broad support for Canadian content from teachers, parents and students.The findings of the Downey report were bolstered by a survey conducted by Mel Hurtig. Hurtig surveyed 3,500 students in their last year of high school to determine their knowledge of Canadian history, geography and current affairs. The results were extremely disappointing, although the validity of the data might be questioned given the method under which the questionnaire was developed:

> Mel Hurtig's Canadian Awareness Test, it was amazing. The rumours were that they went down to Calgary and they got this group of people together. One night one of the women on the committee and one of the men stayed up all night and thought up these questions and came back and presented them. They were dubious questions like: What four men started the Calgary Stampede? and Where were the biggest disasters in Canada? They gave this test to kids and of course they didn't know what four men started the Calgary Stampede and so they said the educational system didn't work. (Parsons interview, June 1992).

The Alberta Department of Education responded to the demand for Canadian Studies by establishing curriculum development teams to develop Canadian Content Resource units based on the 1971 curriculum. The people involved included Ralph Sabey and Mel Hurtig. Ralph Sabey was appointed Consultant in Canadian Studies. He was to "develop and assess Canadian materials within the framework of the

existing curriculum, provide assistance to the Curriculum Branch in the development of Canadian studies and to consult with teachers, the public, and other subject area consultants about Canadian studies- this was seen as meeting some of the recommendations of The Downey Report" (Mawson, p.120).

> Curriculum development teams were assembled from across Alberta having an even representation of urban/rural, male/female . . . The curriculum development teams and the topics which they would be developing had to meet two basic criteria:
>
> 1. units had to be developed within the philosophy of the existing Alberta social studies program (1971).
>
> 2. units had to present a broad view of Canadian society. (p. 121)

Mel Hurtig provided a celebrity type kick-off to organizational meetings after which the teams went to work in their areas working with students and parents, Alberta Education personnel and local resource people. The teams were pulled together to develop a tentative overarching document which provided information on planned skills, concepts, value issues and specific Canadian generalizations. "This document was to guide the development of the units, with the understanding that further modification would likely occur as the process continued" (Mawson, p. 122).

> At the school in which I taught, myself and a teacher called John White, became involved with . . . an experiment doing curriculum development locally, involving students and involving parents . . . At that time, $40,000 was being put aside for 12-13 teams to actually develop curriculum to see if teachers were

capable of it, to see what the involvement of the community would be, the input of school boards. I saw it really as an attempt to decentralize--an effort which I supported very strongly and which I think to a large extent we were quite successful with our projects. (Mawson, p.123)

Just as the national level initiative for development for Canadian resources began to mesh with the curriculum development efforts of the provincial Department of Education, the Premier of the Province, motivated by the strong public interest in the nature of the social studies program, came up with an idea for the development of an encyclopedia of Alberta. Torgunrud, then Director of the Curriculum Branch, and Ledgerwood, Associate Director, adapted the idea:

> . . . taking the germ of an idea from the Premier's desk, I wrote a proposal for the Alberta Heritage Project. There were four components to it: the Kanata Kits, readers for elementary kids--Alberta history and geography, some junior high materials--anthology of materials, and a senior high and adult project--Alberta novels. I wrote up the proposal, took it to Torgunrud, and he got it through Cabinet and approved as the Heritage Trust Fund Project. (Mawson, p. 131)

The general objects of the project were both educational and economic:

1. provide Canadian content learning resources for three Alberta curricula: language arts, science and social studies.
2. Provide an opportunity for the editors, authors, illustrators, and graphic artists, etc. from Alberta and other parts of Canada.
3. Utilize the capabilities of the province for publishing, but with the

recognition that because of the volume, timelines, and quantity of projects, publishing will be required to go beyond the provincial boundaries. (Mawson, p.132)

The funding was 8.37 million dollars from government.

The funding providing for the Kanata Kits had an impact on the development of the Canadian Content Resource Units. According to Mawson (1982), the Kanata kits were built on the earlier resource units but the intent and nature of the kits changed. The original ones were meant to be illustrative type material, the Kanata kits were "curriculum kits with methodology included" (p. 136). Ralph Sabey explains:

> It was a political decision. What we need is more structure--this was the position of the Minister who wanted methodology including in the Kits . . . The Alberta Department of Education indicated that they wanted de-centralization with the original thirteen kits; then they reversed that position when the kits became Kanata Kits and the Department of Education took over. (p. 137)

Larry Booi, a teacher in the Edmonton Public School System, agreed:

> When Canadian Studies came in, it did not have to fit one inquiry model. But when Kanata Kits came in and they were going to be exemplary of a curriculum, then absolutely they had to follow this inquiry model. (Mawson, p.138)

Producing the Kanata Kits required extensive rewriting of the Canadian Studies Resources Units and reduced the autonomy of the development teams. Canadian Studies Resource Unit teams handed their products to Linda Weigl, development coordinator for the Kanata Kits. Larry Booi worked with her as an assistant

coordinator:

> Weigl was in charge and she would hire someone to re-write. Here's the original material. Here's what we need. A lot of the re-writing was in-house stuff. I wrote a lot of it. They were trying to spread it around the province and involve everyone in re-writing, but sometimes it wasn't done right, so I would re-do it. (Mawson, p. 138)

In spite of the extensive re-writing, Booi still described the work as a teachers' project:

> They worked very hard to involve a great number of classroom teachers. That's an impressive thing about the projects . . . It really was a teachers' project right from the Canadian Studies Project where they farmed out to these areas. (p. 139)

F. Horvath, a teacher and consultant with the Calgary Public School Board, questioned the need for rewrites:

> The Canadian Studies Project was launched a few years before the 1978 program was started and various groups got quite committed to their work and to their project. I was part of that. The Grade nine project was the one that I was involved in. As a group we were really excited about what we were doing. Although our project was criticized because it might not have validity across the province, we weren't concerned. We loved it. I think that part of the reason it didn't quite dovetail was that there was this idea of the mutualistic mode in which you let curriculum groups work without constraints and hopefully, in the

> end, programs would be developed that would appear to be coherent. There were a lot of people who worked on the Canadian Studies Project who were unhappy about that approach about the lack of guidance. Many of us felt that the project directors could either give us all the freedom we want and allow us to have a good time, but they should not try to draw us back to something that should have been organized in the first place. Some people's work was changed radically. And the thing about it was that their ideas that were replacing those that were in the original material didn't necessarily appear to be better . . . So some hard feelings that resulted were based on this problem. (Mawson, p. 139)

The Department of Education was quite prepared to act as watchdog to ensure that teachers didn't return the favour and make their own adaptations to the material.

> I was told by a colleague of an in-service that he attended provided by the Department of Education. School administrators from various districts were called together for this workshop. Evidently teachers in the schools were taking some of the multi-media packages and inserting their own pictures in the slide carrels provided in the kits. The object of the in-service was to show school principals how to insert a screw into the carrel so that the teacher would not be able to modify it. (MacKay interview, July 30, 1992)

**Teaching.**

While the new curriculum was not formally introduced until 1971, an extensive process of consultation and preliminary development resulted in an early adoption of the goals and ideas by Department of Education staff. In the 1970 Annual Report of

the Department of Education, a compilation of school inspectors' reports makes the expectation clear:

> The transition from traditional, content-oriented instruction to that of discovery or inquiry made little progress during the year. There were at least two reasons for the slow acceptance of this approach:
>
> (1) the inquiry method requires a considerable amount of reference material, and most schools did not have such material in sufficient quantities.
>
> (2) most social studies teachers studied history as a discipline, and tended to teach the subject matter of social studies as such. As a result, instruction was generally factual in nature, with major emphasis on the memorization of textbook content. A notable exception was found in Social Studies 30, which has been enthusiastically accepted by students and teachers. In classes where teachers were enthusiastic about the discovery approach, and had the required materials, instruction was of good quality and the response was favourable. Students were encouraged to think and to form individual judgments. Otherwise, there was little evidence of individualized instruction. (p.53)

In the same Annual Report the difference between urban and rural school adoption of the new curriculum was evident.

> Standard of Instruction: Urban Elementary Schools (consolidated from the reports of locally-appointed superintendents)
>
> This past year saw the introduction of a new social studies program at some grade levels and pilot projects were carried on at other grade levels. The

program is being revised from grades one to twelve and this subject area has been the focus of much teacher activity and interest. Transition to the new program is not complete so evaluation is difficult. Early indications are that, while the traditional approaches are still in wide use, the new social studies methods are making a favourable impact and are resulting in better instruction and greater learning.

Greatly increased demands were made by social studies teachers for a wide variety of materials, audio-visual equipment, and the services of libraries and Instruction Materials Centers, and it appeared that success in the new program depended in part on the amount of resource material available. Indications are that in-service work in this subject area will continue as schools gradually change from the old courses to the new ones. (Alberta Education, 1970, p. 64)

The same report for rural elementary schools indicated:

Instruction in social studies continued to emphasize the acquisition of facts and knowledge. Little emphasis was placed upon the teaching of skills and upon the development of attitudes and behaviours. Considerable time and money will have to be expended to provide in-service training for teachers as well as reference materials for students so that the transition to the new social studies courses can proceed effectively. (pp. 65-66)

Teachers had a much different perspective. Dorothy Makinen was in her first two years of teaching, first in Little Buffalo and then in Grande Prairie:

I was never formally told what the change in the social studies curriculum was

but my brother-in-law was with Edmonton Public and he was involved with the social studies so he was able to pirate me some of these new social studies things. I used the new stuff even though it hadn't been officially been given the "blessing." I thought if I've got to teach anything I might as well teach the latest stuff. Being a new teacher I really appreciated having that sort of easy to adapt structure. It's not always easy to pick up somebody elses' lesson plan and make your lesson plan, but I found that the ones that they gave where you'd start off with an objective and everything was clearly set out and you'd have a list of the resources you needed. So that you had something concrete to work with and then you could adapt it however you wanted. There would be the objectives-- the main idea of what you wanted to get out--it might only be three or four or two points or something. But they would have a strategy and a number of options. You could do this, this, this or it was very easy to say I will follow this to the letter, or I will do steps one and four and the rest I'm going to do another way. It wasn't ever this is what you have to do, but this is more of a suggestion. When you're first starting teaching it's really tough to build up your teaching materials. When your in your practicum courses sometimes somebody will say well I want you to develop a unit on this topic and you might never ever use that later in your entire life, so it's kind of a useless sort of endeavour, particularly if a professor has a slant towards one thing or the other. It might be something that you just can't ever use. (Makinen, personal interview, April, May 1992)

Teachers were expected to put in a significant effort in the development of classroom materials based on very limited information and, for most, social studies wasn't the only subject they taught. Many other areas of the Alberta curriculum were also undergoing significant changes adding to the frustration for the teacher. New teachers had to worry about their evaluations as well. Katy was a first year teacher in Vimy who taught social studies in a French immersion school :

> The Superintendent was kind of a detached guy. He lived in the community. He had a Ph.D. He was at my first interview with Ed, the principal. They talked to themselves for the whole meeting. How they were going to put students in groups, what grades and so on and every once in a while they would turn to me and say do you think you can teach that and I would say sure. I had no idea what I had agreed to. But I didn't see this guy again until they were evaluating me in order to offer me a second contract.
>
> So he came in and they didn't have an evaluation and there was no conference or anything like that. He just said he was going to come on a certain date and he arrived and stayed with me pretty much the whole day. Of course I went to different classrooms a lot because I taught my homeroom grade 5-6 language arts and French as a second language and French immersion, and then I taught grade 7, 8, and 9 French immersion, grade 9 typing, grade 9 language arts option, grade 7, 8, and 9 French option which was geography in French, grade 3 religion and I forget what else, it was a real hodgepodge. But there was no French curriculum. Because Alberta Education at the time was in flux between

program change. So there was nothing for me to look at. There were probably recommended texts but Vimy didn't have it. So basically I was on my own. So I basically created the curriculum and it was really good fun doing it, actually.

In the grade 5 language arts class we were spending time dividing words into syllables and I've never been very good at that. At the end of the day he sat down and gave me a couple of words and said divide these words into syllables for me and I did and he said that's wrong and he had kept a list of all of the words that I had divided wrongly. . . my mother would have freaked out if she had learned that. So these were his comments about that.

And then later on Ed came down to me and said well you've got your permanent contract but he made some comments about your room. And I said what about my room, because I had spent a lot of money on my room. Setting it up into centres and that sort of thing. Well, he said it was really sloppy. And I wanted to know what he meant by that. Well, he had complained that one of my posters was coming down from the wall. What had happened was that the tack had come out at the top of the poster. But it was at the top of the blackboard. You know those old schools were that strip of bulletin board goes along the top. And one of the tacks had come out and I just hadn't had time to fix it. So Ed asked the guy if he would have said the same thing if it had been a young male teacher. I don't know how the conversation ended. (Personal interview, June 1992).

Dorothy tells a similar story about her evaluation at a school in Little Buffalo.

After spending a full day at the school the only comment the superintendent made was to suggest that tulips be planted in the mud-laden ground surrounding the school. In a later evaluation related to her permanent contract with a separate school system she discovered she was the only teacher who had not received her permanent contract. The superintendent visited her at school and mentioned that he had not seen her at church on Sundays. She explained her husband was on shift work and they only had one car so it was difficult to get to Church, but she promised to make a greater effort. She received her contract the next day.

**The Individual/Social Dialectics of Curriculum**

Adaptation and implementation of curriculum is connected as much to individual values and beliefs as it is to the social context within which it must operate. The social context cannot be conceptualized as a single entity, but as a collection of groups circumscribed by a broader term which we call society. The interaction among these groups, the competition for power and dominance, and the valuing of particular forms of knowledge are all factors that shape curriculum adaptation and implementation. The dialectics between individual needs and group needs at multiple levels creates a complex plot for this story about curriculum. The story around Doug Ledgerwood stands out as an example of this complex interaction between curriculum experts, individuals who were politically motivated, individuals who were entrepreneurs and last, and least, teachers.

The story reveals an increasingly educated group of men involved in a power struggle over who will hold the authority to dictate what is valued as important

knowledge. The struggle is fought primarily in two arenas: the structure of the Department of Education where the battle for control over decision-making is fought and the public arena where the rhetoric of curriculum is aired and public support or criticism is used to justify change. Little acknowledgment is given to the classroom where teacher, students, and resources are creating their own curriculum.

Ledgerwood is a key character in the plot. He begins with a group of individuals dedicated to the ideal of a teacher developed curriculum. The 1967 Conference reinforces the values and beliefs of this group and insulates them from changing conditions. Ledgerwood describes the social context in the late 1960's as permissive, allowing a freedom to learn. He acknowledges that by 1978 "society was swinging to the right." He claims that it wasn't the committee that changed, but rather society, schools, teachers and government officials and that the committee was reactive to these changes. This may mean that Ledgerwood's progressive group had an opportunity to define a curriculum that satisfied their needs and values in 1971. This doesn't mean that the curriculum necessarily matched societal beliefs and values so much as it means that it was okay for individuals to come up with progressive ideas and attempt to implement them. The curriculum defined at the 1967 conference shows little input from either the public or teachers. The selection process seemed to emphasize pulling together a group of like-minded individuals who over a two-week period (an exceptionally long time for such a conference) went to the mountains and came back with tablets.

As Ledgerwood went from community to community spreading the word of the

new curriculum the input is quite clear, the 1971 curriculum ideal is not working and he must compromise his beliefs. Abolishing required texts and expecting teachers to develop their own materials was perhaps one of the most controversial recommendations, primarily because it challenged a conception of curriculum as text which was supported by many teachers, but also because it struck at the lifeblood of a beginning publishing industry in the province. Both would feel the economic implications of this recommendation. Required texts were subsidized for approximately forty per cent of the cost by the Department of Education. This enabled school districts to purchase adequate resources and proved a lucrative policy for textbook suppliers and publishers. In a textbook free classroom neither the teachers nor the suppliers would reap the benefit of resources subsidization. The battle over resources set up a whole new plot that pitted Ledgerwood's ideal of a textbook free classroom against a group of entrepreneurs intent on ensuring that Canadian studies were incorporated into the classroom through the development of approved resources.

Ledgerwood's other major battle is within the Department of Education. Throughout the period there is an increasing interest in the social studies curriculum as a plank in the platform of politicians. Each change to the organization includes an increasing number of public or political appointments and adds another layer to the process for approving curriculum changes. The committee responsible for social studies curriculum development ends up with at least three additional levels of authority over it. Where it once made policy there is now a curriculum policy board to dictate the parameters under which the curriculum will be developed. The Minister

of Education then approves the recommendations of the policies board, after consultation with a Cabinet committee on education. The Premier may still reserve approval, until he is sure the curriculum complies with the political rhetoric surrounding schools and other pieces of legislation that relate to this.

In the end Ledgerwood loses the battle and retires from the field leaving another charismatic leader, Frank Crowther, to remove the progressive curriculum committee members, rewrite the curriculum and, achieve approval for the 1978 curriculum by going straight to the Minister of Education. A hero and a happy ending? Well not really. The curriculum was approved as interim and optional, faint praise for a decade of refinement.

**The Personal/Professional Dialectics of Curriculum**

Teachers are rarely central to the debates which result in the adaptation or implementation of curriculum, yet curriculum change is often directed at professional practice. This may set up a tension between the professional knowledge of teachers learned through their teacher education program and their classroom experiences as well as with their personal knowledge about what they value and believe as individuals.The curriculum is presented to them as a document intended to direct their classroom work. There is little opportunity for teachers to understand the "subtle intents" (Downey, p. 7) that are embedded in lengthy debates by curriculum planners over the value of particular knowledge, whether content is more important than skill development, or whether concepts are more important than values. Teachers were and are still simply not party to these debates and so the curriculum remained "far more

an idea in the minds of its creators than it is a guide to Social Studies education in the classrooms of the Province" (p. 7).

The work of teachers was uniquely important to the implementation of the 1971 curriculum and its subsequent adaptation into the 1978 curriculum. While the text of the 1971 curriculum gave teachers very little to work with, the model units were intended to provide a deeper rationale that was teacher-developed. Hugh Ross's introduction to one such model clearly directs teachers. He suggests that they must have the courage to try something new and to risk making mistakes. But his rationale speaks more of bluster than pedagogy. His language is more patronising than collegial. His model more teacher-directed than inquiry-based.

The story suggests that teachers were quite prepared to try new things and attempt to adapt their practice, but that their work was not valued. Teachers working on the Canadian content units were excited and loved the work but they resented the attempts after the fact to reorganize their work so that it fit within the curriculum. That was not what they had been asked to do and their work was being changed. They also questioned the process and suggested that those in power were making changes which weren't any better than their own work. Teachers also resented the lack of attention paid to their input. When Ledgerwood was developing the draft curriculum they felt their input was ignored. But when the whole story is told, few teachers were involved in the development of curriculum or curriculum materials.

For the ordinary teacher the whole process of curriculum change went on with minimal impact on their lives in the classroom. Katy and Dorothy both started their

first year of teaching in 1977. According to them, they were not apprised of the potential change in the curriculum in their teacher education program. They took jobs in rural areas remote from the power struggle taking place in large urban centers. Both of them felt the absence of "curriculum," but both of them were prepared to develop their own curriculum based on resources available and their assessment of the needs of their students and the school community.

Social studies was only one of the subjects taught by both these teachers. Katy makes it clear that this was not the only area of curriculum change. The traditionally heavy load assigned to new teachers meant that Katy was dealing with a variety of courses and grades without a curriculum or resources to go on. She tells of spending her evenings pouring over the available material and crying as she "looked for the curriculum."

The greatest dilemma for both Katy and Dorothy seems to be their relationships with school superintendents. Their expectation of evaluation based on some criteria inherent in professional standards is at odds with their personal experience. The carefully constructed reports of school superintendents in Annual Reports discussing instructional methods, teacher competence and classroom materials has no relationship to the feedback provided to either of these beginning teachers. Clearly, the reports were intended to feature the superintendent as a professional in a political arena. How unfortunate they did not see their role as coach or mentor to the young professionals they were responsible for evaluating.

For both Dorothy and Katy the curriculum is not something that just happens in

the classroom. It is a guide for education that they carry with them both inside and outside the classroom. They have an understanding of their role as teacher that relates to creating an environment for learning for their students that goes beyond the community in which the school is situated. Katy takes some of her students to Edmonton, as does Dorothy because they believe the experience will contribute to their students' learning. They see their responsibility as teachers to work within the scope of the curriculum but to actively adapt the materials for the specific needs of their students. Katy even suggests that to use someone else's material is not, after all, "the work of a true professional" and suggests that all material must be adapted as activities within the classroom unfold and students' needs and interests emerge.

**Curriculum: Text or Environment?**

Multiple perspectives on curriculum are evident in the stories surrounding the 1971 and 1978 changes to the Alberta Social Studies curriculum. Some curriculum experts and politicians spoke of the curriculum as if it were a conduit between society and school. Their responsibility was to structure a curriculum that would feed that right values to the students in school via the teacher. The teacher was simply part of the system that made up the conduit. Other curriculum experts saw the curriculum as a master plan constructed from their own beliefs and values, intended to direct the work of teachers. Teachers would implement the curriculum through materials developed in relation to local community interests which served as models for other teachers to adopt. Teachers spoke of the curriculum as a guide or as textbooks or resource materials, something to guide their professional work which could be

adapted according to the needs of their students.

In all of these perspectives the curriculum appears as a text that is intended to incorporate the values and beliefs of the dominant group. The process of producing the text became more and more complex as the processes of curriculum change became increasingly politicized. The curriculum was submitted to drafts and redrafts, language had to be clarified to make it undertstandable to teachers; categories of people were consulted, ten specialists, ten non-specialists, something akin to Noah loading animals on to the his arc to ensure survival from the flood. The process is so layered and complex that few of the people who provided input can recognize their own contributions. In spite of the involvement of teachers in the building of the text of curriculum the final document is separate from their own teaching practice, written by a few individuals who have the power to superimpose their own theories of curriculum and content on the outcome.

The story suggests that for one brief moment the door to curriculum development swung open and teachers were invited in to become professionals side by side with curriculum experts and administrators. This momentary pause in the exercise of authority and status around curriculum was a peculiar moment for teachers who were by and large unprepared for such an exercise. It was not curriculum development and implementation that teachers were unprepared for, it was the political structures and power and status that surround the curriculum. The problem was not that teachers were unprepared to develop and deliver their own curriculum; Katy and Dorothy were quite able to develop their own curriculum. They did,

however, understand the authority of the curriculum text and wanted some assurance that their pedagogy matched with whatever the broader expectations were.

It would appear that whatever intent there was to place curriculum development and implementation in the hands of teachers failed. The power and political status to be achieved through the perceived control of the social studies curriculum was evidently too important to leave in the hands of teachers and structures were quickly put in place to take back the potential autonomy given to them. When the Kanata Kits were finally sent out to the schools and principals had been taught how to make sure teachers didn't modify them, the message was clear, teachers were to deliver what was given they were not to develop their own materials. The Curriculum Policy Board insisted that the 1978 curriculum had the right amount of structure except for the one-quarter unstructured time. By doing so, they suggest that they were unwilling to leave any discretion to the teacher as to how time would be spent in the social studies classroom.

The multiple perspectives on curriculum and the metaphors inherent within those perspectives did little to aid the adaptation and implementation of the social studies curriculum. The struggle for power over the right to change the curriculum created the effect of at least two cultures that did not communicate. The classroom teacher, unless she was directly involved in some aspect of curriculum development, became invisible and silent.

Philip Jackson (1992) discusses the multiple perspectives on curriculum and suggests "there is no definition of curriculum that will endure for all time and . . .

that every definition serves the interest of the person or group putting it forward" (p. 10). Goodlad (in Jackson, 1992) doubts that a single definition of curriculum will ever be found. He does not discount the importance of definitions, but he doesn't think the search for a proper definition is an appropriate goal for curriculum research. Schon's (1979) early work on generative metaphors suggests that seeking a metaphor that encompasses the concerns and interests of persons or groups interacting with each other may provide a way of enabling different groups to work in concert rather than in opposition to each other.

The common metaphor throughout the story is curriculum as text. There is a pervasive assumption that this text is to guide the work of the teacher and that the values inherent in the text are suitable to all learners in the province. The process of incorporating what is valued knowledge is the responsibility of a few curriculum experts who interpret the expressed values of teachers, and the public and boil them down into a potent document which makes up the curriculum text. The resources chosen and the structures supporting the delivery of the curriculum should attend to the intents of the curriculum and should not be left to teachers. There is also a clarification in the process that teachers are not creators of curriculum but should be deliverers of curriculum. It is also revealed that teachers have a very limited knowledge of the subtle intents of the curriculum and an understanding that when change takes place significant efforts must be made to inform teachers about the curriculum or there will be problems with implementation.

The persistence of metaphor of curriculum as text and the underlying values

and assumptions related to this ensures that all curriculum change is doomed to fail the tests of implementation. Failure hangs on a number of assumptions. First, that it is possible to effectively convey the subtle intents of curriculum texts to the large heterogeneous group of people who make up the teaching profession in the province. Second, in spite of the rhetoric offered by the Curriculum Policies Board that it is important to allow for local interests and needs in a curriculum, the controls put in place, including curriculum materials, allocation of program time and evaluative structures force teachers to adhere to the curriculum text. This implies an underlying belief that all students should have the same experiences. This failure to allow for the creation of curriculum around individual and community interests, needs and concerns disempowers both the teacher and the learner and ignores the possibility that curriculum is created and implemented by teachers and students at the crossroads between curriculum and pedagogy - the classroom.

Schon suggests that a generative metaphor should serve to equalize power relationships and provide a broad enough frame for problem-setting to allow individuals or groups with different perspectives to mutually seek a solution. Adopting a metaphor for curriculum that attends to the creation of an environment for learning rather than a text for guiding offers possibilities for the various constituencies in education to collaborate on the creation and implementation of a responsive curriculum. Such a reconceptualization might serve to empower both learners and teachers, without losing the capacity to attend to the necessary checks and balances that ensure that the schooling system relates to the broader public.

Webster's Dictionary defines environment as "the aggregate of social and cultural conditions (as customs, laws, language, religion and economic and political organization) that influence the life of an individual or community" (p. 760). Conceptualization of the curriculum as an environment comprised of a diversity of constituencies whose interactions affect the life of an individual or community might increase the attention given to other aspects of curriculum and move curriculum planners away from a concentration on the text of curriculum. The text would be understood as only one factor of a complex system of interacting phenomena directed at educating learners. Such a conceptualization would acknowledge the role of teachers not just as curriculum implementers, but as professionals engaged in the continuous development of curriculum according to the needs of their individual students and the school/community context.

Perhaps this broader definition of curriculum would allow for curriculum developers, social activists, politicians, teachers, and students to share power in deciding what constitutes important knowledge in the context of the needs of the learners in the communities in which they reside rather than adhering to a hegemonic system of curriculum development and change that reflects the values and beliefs of a limited number of individuals who are under the misapprehension that it is possible to dictate what will be learned in schools.

References

Alberta. Alberta Education (1969). *Annual report*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.

Alberta. Alberta Education (1970). *Annual report*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.

Alberta. Alberta Education (1971). *Annual report*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.

Alberta. Alberta Education. (1971). *Responding to change*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F.M. (1992). Teacher as curriculum maker. In P.W. Jackson (Ed.), Handbook of research on curriculum (pp. 363-401). New York: Macmillan.

Downey, L.W. Research Associates Limited. (1975). The social studies in Alberta - 1975: A report of an assessment. Edmonton: Alberta Education.

Jackson, P.W. (1992). Conceptions of curriculum and curriculum specialists. In P.W. Jackson (Ed.), Handbook of Research on Curriculum (pp. 3-40). New York: Macmillan.

Korteweg, L. (1972). A decade of social studies curriculum development in Alberta. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton.

Marker, G., & Mehlinger, H. (1992). Social studies. In P.W. Jackson (Ed.), Handbook of research on curriculum (pp. 830-851). New York: Macmillan.

Mawson, S. (1982). Social studies curriculum development in Alberta, 1975-78. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton.

Odynak, S.N. (Ed.). (1967). The Alberta conference on the social studies curriculum for grades I-XII: A rationale for the social studies. (Conference Proceedings).

Edmonton AB: Alberta Education.

Ross, H. (Ed.). (1971). Social Studies Handbook. Edmonton AB: Edmonton Public School Board.

Schon, D.A. (1979). Generative metaphor: A perspective on problem-setting in social policy. In A. Ortony (ed.), Metaphor & thought. Cambridge: University Press.

Skau, K. G, (1988). A curriculum of change: Social studies in Alberta. History and Social Science Teacher, 23(4), 214-220.

Watts, M. (1967). Foreword. In S.N. Odynak, (Ed.), The Alberta Conference on the Social Studies Curriculum for Grades I-XII: A Rationale for the Social Studies. (Conference Proceedings), (pp. ii-iv). Alberta Education: Edmonton.